

1997

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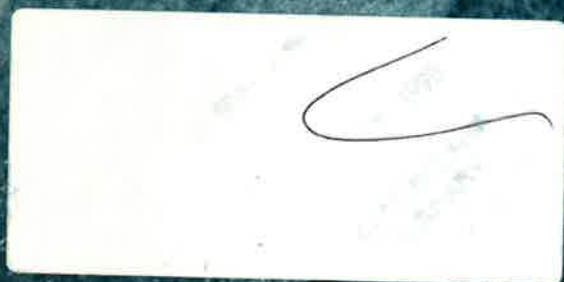
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The Review

W&I

WORDS & IMAGES



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## Editor's Note

**W**e are excited to bring to you this year's edition of *The Review: Words & Images*.

Historically, *The Review* has served to increase cultural awareness of the literary and visual arts by presenting work from both the USM community as well as the local community at-large. For this 1997 edition, however, we decided to showcase just the talents of USM students and alumni in order to take a look at our roots so to speak.

In addition, this is the first year that *The Review* has teamed up with *The Word Society* to bring to you the winners of their annual "Celebrate Writers" literary contest. We are very pleased to present this work to you.

Lastly, we encourage you to get to know about the Media Studies program by reading the feature article on page 64. *The Review* is very fortunate to be adopted by this new area of study. Through the advisorship of Barbara Hope and other Media Studies support we will be enabled to expand our publication in 1998.

Thank you and enjoy!

  
Bethany Vogt  
Publishing Director



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putting up with us*

# Thirty Years from now.... At Age Seventy

by Catherine Brown

**A**t age seventy I have worn time like  
a woven shawl over my shoulders.  
Intricate patterns show a path taken.

My skin is thinner and has grown thicker.  
It is not easily bruised by harshness that comes my way.  
My skin is transparent.  
At my age, I have no need to be someone I'm not.  
In fact, transparency has more depth brought on by years of  
becoming and being.

My vision is dull and bleary. Just the same,  
my eyes sparkle with wonderment and see more clearly.  
I can see you standing alone.  
My thin lips create a thick smile that invites  
you to be a friend.  
My heart has weakened as my love for  
humankind has strengthened.

My wrinkled and crooked hand straightens enough  
to grab your hand as you reach out for help.

My fragile arms are strong to hug and comfort you when you feel  
frightened or lost.

My hearing is not so good these days but I still hear your cry  
and I will wipe your tears,

My swollen feet have traveled many miles.  
I will share with you my moments in time  
if you care to listen or,  
I can listen to you share your journey.

Even on my fixed income, for you know how  
tight it can be,  
I have plenty of wealth to share with you.  
You need only to accept it.

Don't be fooled by the crackle in my voice.  
It could be a voice of reason and wisdom.

My memory has forgotten the details yet  
the experiences are as real to me today  
as they were yesterday.

Though my body tries to slow me down,  
my will presses forward as  
I seek more understanding.

And my mind,  
thinks I'm forty so,  
I have much work to do.

With my bones slightly bent,  
I stand tall before you.  
I have lived a life of dignity  
and integrity. When my time is up,  
if I have made a difference in your life,  
then I know my spirit will live on.

Untitled by Concetta Smith





# A Woman in Parts

by Lisa J. DeHahn

This woman's hands  
Work worn and strong,  
Are hands that are timid  
Afraid to be wrong.

This woman's mouth  
Is poised in a smile,  
Yet behind her teeth  
She screams all the while.

This woman's heart  
Tender and broken  
Wants to forgive  
What cannot be spoken.

This woman's eyes  
Seeing more than most  
Are clouded with shadows  
Of childhood ghosts.

This woman's mind  
Is filled up with facts  
Which cannot replace the  
LOVE that she lacks.

In this woman's body  
Standing lean and tall  
Hides a frightened child  
Curled up in a ball.

This woman's child  
Buried inside  
Never grew up  
Just slowly died.

And at her loss,  
The woman cried.

Untitled by Lori Kerns



## Soft Summer

by Ellen McEnaney

Lying to face the sky  
flat back to cool soil  
and eyes tight  
it begins to rain.  
Stray drops  
dot fallen skin  
to form pink puddles  
of flesh. Skin pools  
with each drop of rain  
until at last as if of clay  
I am soft and formidable again.  
And with a swelling storm  
that binding body slips away  
to a flushed pond surrounding,  
spread arms and legs  
and long stretched neck  
and to the rain carries me past solidity.

Untitled by Martha Whitten



# Taste Of Knowledge

by Laurie Glidden

**H**ow am I regarded among you men?  
What kind of story carries my name?  
I am the elusive woman who left your bed  
For a woman's.  
I slither on my belly,  
Tongue unfurled and testing feminine air.

In the story of Adam and Eve,  
I would be the sweetness  
Eve forfeited Adam  
And his phallic paradise for.

Are you sure it wasn't a peach  
She suckled without shame,  
Gaining Knowledge;  
Deposing you as God?

Taking a taste,  
Man fell, panting  
After sanctuary in the pit  
Of a womb;  
So like the soft peach  
Your seed could grow hard there  
Leeching life from the fruit...

But you are denied access to immortality.  
Having only apples.  
An apple a day keeps condemnation away?  
Is my myth stretched over such wings  
To spare your pride?

Are you afraid of the power I gain  
Drinking pomegranate juice?  
Gods, Goddesses, life and death wet my lips.  
Do you fear me  
Because the Knowledge we share is of women?

The Word Society  
contest winner

## Adam's Mango

by Jennifer Boggs

**W**hy an apple?  
It is possible that the fruit of knowledge-  
That tempting fruit-  
Was more than a mere Macintosh,  
Far superior to a simple  
red delicious.

Instead, a pear.  
Or better yet, a pomegranate,  
A kiwi, a mango.  
Yes, a mango!  
Now that is a fruit,  
A fleshy food worth dying for.

How much easier to imagine  
The furry pit of a mango  
Becoming lodged in Adam's throat,  
The sensuous peelings of knowledge  
Scattered around his feet.

The mango-  
Its slowbeat tango of smarts  
and free will-  
Somehow both firm and tender.

Yet, when the beautiful mango  
Is in the chubby, outstretched hand  
Of a young schoolboy,  
It is an offering tinged with  
Guilty pleasure,  
While the apple only crunches  
With regret.

# Shortcake

by Jennifer Boggs

**S**trawberries, juicy sweet,  
Sticky berries straw and wheat.  
Sunny day, the sunshine yields  
Red, unfettered berry fields.

Strawberries running down to the creek,  
Fresh and fuzzy, cheek to cheek.  
Flirting berries hug the day,  
Each wears dimples and a green beret.

Strawberry girl, bare legs, bare feet,  
Strawberry blonde and juicy sweet.  
She sits leaning back into her mood  
And waits for her young blonde angel food.

Apple Study #7 by Bethany Vogt







Untitled by Hugh Chatfield

## Rope and Mist

by Bronson Fish

Jamie fell against the rough face of the tree, gasping for breath. The bark was rough against her cheek and under her palms. Like dew the mist from the dam hung cold on the surface of the tree as she pressed close, for respite from the heat, and for comfort.

Last night she had dreamt of the ravine and the dam; now she feared that she might be dreaming again. The beating of her heart, the roar of water falling through the sluices of the dam, and the rising buzz of insects filled her ears. Her vision was obscured by the ripples of heat rising, like currents underwater and the mist of the dam. The mist was cold as it rushed through her nostrils, like winter air, but the heat of an Indian summer pounded on the grass not far behind. Would she wake up and find

herself in the trailer? No, she would never be in the trailer again, as surely as if it had burned to the ground.

She braced herself for the climb. There were no low hanging branches on this tree, but the bark was very rough and the trunk not too big around. Jamie pushed off the ground and clawed her way up as far as momentum would carry her, then grabbed the tree with her legs and shimmied the few remaining feet.

This is why she had chosen this tree: bigger kids couldn't climb it. Jamie was such a light twelve-year old that she could find purchase on the rough bark and it would hold her. As she climbed she stepped on her skirt and almost fell, but it tore out from under her foot. It was a shame about the skirt, but she'd only worn it for Mrs. Moore anyway. The dottering old woman would have been thrilled to see her dressing "like a lady," but she wasn't going to school now, not today, not ever. It was a nice skirt though, willowy and light, golden-colored and a little translucent, with a pattern of broad-leaved, star-shaped flowers. As she had looked in the mirror

she'd admitted to herself that it looked pretty on her and she looked pretty in it.

When she'd reached her perch she thought that maybe it would feel good to abandon the skirt and shirt and go swimming, to dive from the tree into the ravine and plunge into the cold river, to be immersed where no one could find her. None except maybe Josh—oh God, Josh. She hoped he wasn't skipping school today too, but she was sure he was; it was just the perfect day for it. She couldn't face him now; the thought of kissing him the previous afternoon made her shrivel. Not that he wasn't cute—he was the sweetest boy Jamie had ever known, like a brother. That was just it—it felt gross just to be kissing at all, and with Josh it felt more like a sin, like incest. They had skinny-dipped together a hundred times, but now she felt ashamed of it. If he came and found her he might try again. Just the thought made her face burn red.

Immersed in the shade of the tree it was cooler, soothing. The ever-present insects were all around, but their hum was comforting. She didn't swat at the fly that landed on the crest of her forehead and it promptly buzzed along, as if out of respect. She took a deep breath, savoring the fresh air of the tree, but in it she caught the slight scent of decay—leaves tricked by the returning summer rotting pungently in the warm shade. She wondered how much longer the heat would hold, thinking that Indian summer was like a very cruel lie.

She walked out on the branch, balancing upright, her legs impossibly long and slender to be perched up on the slender limb. She swayed as though she would fall at any moment, but she reached the split branch where the end of the rope was stuck, just as she had many times over the

summer, and the summer before that too. She held the dirty rope in both her hands. It was woven thick and strong; there wasn't much bend to the six or so inches she could cover with her hands. She squeezed it tightly. The coils were tough and resilient; they felt like huge veins and she imagined what else might feel like that rope.

Peering down Jamie considered the drop where the ground slunk away from the woods, descending more and more steeply until it fell into the ravine, broken by sporadic stones and scraggly brush. She looked down into the river below, churning as the falls came crashing down, then stepped off the branch, falling fast. Gripping tight she wrapped her thighs around the rope and swung into the mist, squeezing her eyes tight against the powerful spray. The waterfall was very close; the roar shut out all other sound, rising and falling like a crashing wave as she passed. Then reaching the far end of the arc she hung suspended for a split second over the thick brush on the other side of the ravine. She could hear the insects again loudly and felt the heat warming her wet clothes. She was like a bird hanging on the wind. Then she fell, crashing again through the spray.

She swung for a very long time. She kept



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shifting her weight to keep up her momentum, for if she didn't she wouldn't keep reaching solid ground at the edges of the ravine and would have a long hard climb up the rope to get back to the bank. She had to keep swinging, to keep moving, flying. On this day she decided that she would rather let go and fall into the ravine than struggle up ten feet of rope just to get in trouble for skipping school—as if that was all she had to face.

The girlie girls waited for her at school, to taunt her about the cutoffs and boys' flannels and undershirts; she was accustomed to wearing hand-me-downs from her wayward older brother. Truthfully, it had never touched her much, what girls thought. Girls were stupid and talked about stupid things; gossip, fashion magazines, the latest teen heart-throb, romantic movies—girl-stuff. The only kids she knew who cared about adventure and the woods and the world were boys. She was a good kick-ball and baseball player, that's what counted. Her mom left fun stuff around the house, like cigarettes, and Jack had dirty magazines in the back of the closet. She could climb a tree and she never, ever whined or giggled. That's what counted, at least until Josh kissed her.

The boys were defecting, the older ones especially. Kevin, who had first made the other boys let her in on the games, was fourteen-and-a-half now. He used to take her tubing with his family; they were really cool and were always willing to include her in little outings, the kinds of things her mom never bothered with. He still seemed to like her, except he didn't want his girlfriend to see them together, and she was almost always around.

Jamie thought that Jody was a fat, ugly name

and that it fit Kevin's girlfriend, even though she was a petite, china-faced little doll. She was thirteen and still in middle school and led her crowd like a stampede right over Jamie whenever they passed, as if Jamie wasn't even there. Once Jamie almost got in a fight with Jody's best friend after being pushed to the ground, but Jody had split it up. "Come on Katie. She's not *worth it*," she'd said. She was looking right at Jamie, dismissing her with a disappointed look once-over.

Now the boys didn't want to hang out in the woods and make up names for their little gangs or do any of the old boy stuff. Jamie supposed she ought to be thankful to Josh for even still liking her; but now that he had kissed her it seemed... underhanded.

She hadn't noticed the van pulling up. There was no road and she wouldn't expect anyone to drive through the loose wood. So she was surprised when Mr. Dimitri shouted. "Janet Emery, you come down here at once!" She swung away before she could react.

As an assistant-principal Mr. Dimitri considered himself responsible for seeing that kids made it to school, like some throwback truant officer. He was zealous, enough to drive the van through the wood to get Jamie without leaving his other charges unattended. Josh was in the van, looking out with wide, concerned eyes. Patrick Mahoney, a less than nothing twerp Jamie had beaten up once for torturing a frog, was there too, relishing the excitement of someone else getting in trouble.

There had always been a certain fun to Mr. Dimitri, a challenge that elevated skipping school from banal misconduct to true rebellion. He wasn't mean, just determined and unforgiving. Jamie had

even gone out of her way to risk him catching her. Today, however, he seemed menacing. He acted no different; she was just determined not to come down. She didn't want to have to talk to the principal—or the guidance counselor. She wondered if they knew about Jack and her mom yet.

Jamie swung towards the bank, looming close to Mr. Dimitri, then back again. "All right little miss," he said. "I'm sure this seems like fun, but there's no way you're going to avoid coming to school. There's no way down without going past me and I can wait all day."

He didn't know about Jack; there was no pity or concern in his voice, no gentle coaxing, no "it'll be all right Jamie, we just want to take care of you." She swung in and out again, disappearing behind the spray each time she swung away. "This is getting boring fast Miss Emery."

Josh was watching from the van, his eyes imploring. It had to have been him who ratted out their spot. Why? Now he couldn't hide here anymore either. Did he know? No, he was probably just worried because she hadn't called him when she decided to skip and thought it was his fault. He was worried about the way she ran away after he kissed her.

Mr. Dimitri looked concerned now as Jamie swung near and away from him again. Maybe he'd noticed she was wearing a skirt and thought it unusual to the point of being alarming, or that she was oddly unresponsive, without wisecracks or defiance. "Jamie, this isn't helping matters any. Why don't you come down?"

Come down to what, she cried in her head as the sight of the van and the assistant-principal disappeared behind the cloud of spray.

"I don't want to have to call your mother," he called to her, meaning that he was serious and Jamie was really getting in trouble this time. Jamie caught the branch above him and scampered up before he could grab her legs. He fell on his butt with a sort of a dry splat and got up, brushing his pants off without seeming undignified.

Jamie sat and looked down on him, swinging her legs not far out of his reach. She couldn't see into the van anymore and she wondered if Josh was

going to try to come out and talk to her. It must have been obvious to them now that she wasn't just being a troublemaker. Mr. Dimitri looked up at her, squinting as though if he just looked hard enough he might see what was wrong in her eyes.

"Go ahead. Call my mother." Jamie said in a very quiet, gentle voice, not defiant, not triumphant, just honest. Mr. Dimitri's eyes said that he wouldn't. Instead he returned to the van, opened the door, and

started to do something that she couldn't see, something that required Josh and Patrick Mahoney to get out.

"Are you mad?" asked Josh, standing close to the van, looking up at her from under his hung head, abashed and repentant. He had his hands stuck in his pockets and his shoulders hunched. He twisted nervously, kicking at the turf a bit now and then. He was a good looking kid and Jamie wondered why he wasn't interested in the girlie girls, 'cause she knew they would be interested in him.

Maybe that was silly—this was Josh, after all. If there was anyone Jamie had ever trusted, it was him. Hadn't Josh proved himself when they broke into Derick—the Gorilla—Tate's locker to booby trap it with compost? Only Josh had gotten caught and he'd taken the blame all on himself, even though it meant both suspension and a beating. Of course he would never betray her for any poofy-headed girl.

When she thought about it like that, when he was acting like her age-old pal from fourth-grade, squeamishly trying to apologize, he didn't seem so unappealing. Maybe if it hadn't been so sudden and he hadn't been acting so unlike himself she wouldn't have been so harsh about his kiss. Maybe if she'd had some warning and gotten the chance to think about it, to look at him just a little bit differently, maybe kissing him would have felt good, like how it felt to be squished under his superior weight when she wrestled him, doomed to lose.

"Yeah, but that's not it." Jamie said nonchalantly, as though she'd hardly thought twice about it. "It's forgotten." They looked at each other with relieved smiles. Then Jamie looked away. "I just can't go back to school anymore." She couldn't go back and face everyone, knowing that they

**Hadn't  
Josh  
proved  
himself  
when they  
broke into  
Derick--  
the--Go-  
rilla--  
Tate's  
locker to  
booby  
trap it  
with com-  
post?**


would suddenly be nice to her, distantly nice.

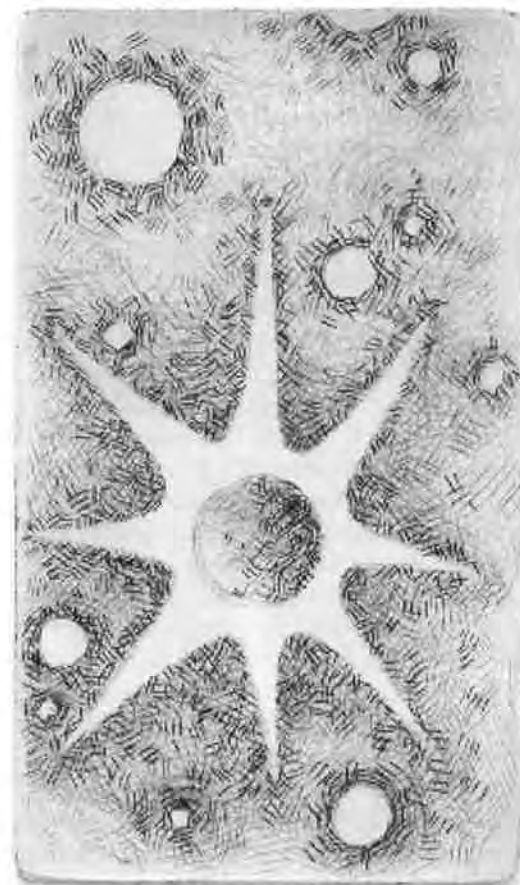
By tomorrow everyone would know about what happened to Jack and no one would push her in the halls anymore. They would make a wide, deferent path for her as they saw her approach. The guidance counselor would take her out of class and want to talk about her feelings and about what was going to happen now.

Her mom was already gone, Jamie was sure. Before Jamie had left for school the thin, worn, sun-beaten, woman had hooked her long black hair behind her ear and looked her daughter in the eye and told her that she really loved her and don't ever forget it. Late the night before Jamie had woken up in the trailer and heard her mom and Jack fighting, fighting rough, the sounds of it loud in the pale darkness of her little closet of a room. It was like many other fights, except this time it came to a sudden abrupt stop, with a long, resonant bang. Jamie had lain awake and listened to the shuffling around the house, to Jack's truck being driven off and back again. She had listened to her mom moving about the trailer all through the night and into the morning. When she was woken up for school Jamie looked for Jack, but he and the little woven rug were gone.

Jamie's eyes were like a frightened animal's when she saw Mr. Dimitri pull one of the wide seats

out of the van and bring it over to the tree. Jamie skittered away from the truck, towards the end of the branch as he leaned it against the trunk. "Now I'm going to come up and help you down, okay Jamie? We're going to work everything out." He said it with that voice, so understanding, sympathetic, that voice that cared so much about something it knew nothing about, cared so much for a person he wouldn't think of in three years.

Jamie took her rope and leapt off the branch. Mr. Dimitri swore as she swung down and out of his reach. She disappeared into the mist, connected to the world by a thick, woven cord, silver with moisture under the sun. The water roared as it fell out of the dam, crashing into the river far below. The rope fell back, limply, to swing slowly in a descending spiral until it hung limp in the mist. 



Untitled by Charity Pabst

## Jukebox

by Bronson Fish

She standing at the jukebox, authentically skinny, in a halo of colored glass and bubbles churning like his mind.

He is smoking in the non-smoking section, which he says is fine, because he is a non-smoker, just... well, everyone there is smoking anyway.

It fills the empty spaces, the lapses in conversation pregnant with unspoken thoughts.

They might not admit it, but they knew each other well for recent acquaintances. Do they speak like friends or like strangers?

He tipping his chair, leaning back... the space yawning between them. Leather boots clutter about underneath, fighting for space close to the other.

## No Strings Attached

by Catherine Brown

Red, yellow  
sky blue  
balloons  
weightless  
and  
full of empty space.  
Balls with  
puckered lips  
climb  
higher  
out of sight.  
No strings attached.

## Incubus

by Gregory L. Burns

My mother looks like I do,  
With red hair and pale, white skin.  
She probably wonders if it was worth it to  
Give birth to a monster as Victor Frankenstein did. A child who  
Gave nothing but insults. As a parent,  
Would you like to be called an asshole or a shithead?  
I doubt you'd put up with it. My mother and father did.  
I never got punished, I got a Polaris four-wheeler and a Ski-Doo.  
My father was alive then. Did he die with the feeling that I could change?  
I changed too late for him to see it. Maybe it can benefit my mother,  
Alive.



# Archaic Soup

by Jennifer Allen

**W**e skip through our damned days  
nevering and whatevering  
with glass butterflies in our bosoms and slippery hamsters  
made of gray matter that spin the wheels in our heads

We are naked beneath our clothes - the thin-layered snake  
skins of our meandering souls, that covet but reveal  
the rattling bones from our earthquake yesterdays -  
these skins we shed without regret or second thought

We - pruning and preening our mirror faces  
so as to keep them neat and clean as  
proper clones should be -  
so everyone can see what they want to see  
within each other's silver-lines faces at a glance - themselves;

We are mona lisa carbon copies running in circles, scattering  
in all directions at any sudden noise  
like flies lighting upon a dead seagull  
that is sprawled on highway's carpet -  
once a creature that feeds  
now a creature that is fed upon.

We put in a pot what we do not understand -  
minced Darkness  
crushed Death  
sliced and diced Life  
two fingers of Light  
half a teaspoon of Hell  
a pinch of Heaven  
marinated God  
and, cut in the shape of gingerbread men, Thought -  
all sprinkled into the big black pot  
archaic soup  
(grandmother's old recipe)  
and stirred to a slow simmer with the mighty pen

We light a fire beneath the pot and dance  
around it and chant about the blood on our hands  
how the season of death is approaching  
about seagulls and flies and snakeskins  
we grab with our dirty bare hands  
pieces of words  
which have already begun to dissolve in the soup  
we eat ideas and chew them up  
with our mouths open



Untitled by Martha Whitten



*Elinor —  
taking to the sky*

Elinor - taking to the sky by Jessica Yankura

# You WOULD'VE NEVER THOUGHT...

(the anniversary poem)

by Julie Ankrom

You would've never thought that a handsome young college student would walk into her department store, changing her life indefinitely.

You would've never thought these two opposites would make such a perfect match.

You would've never thought that her answering "Yes..." to the question in the card, would bring them together for life.

You would've never thought on a cloudy November afternoon, in that small New York town, they'd be pronounced Mr. and Mrs. for the very first time.

You would've never thought that their wedding day would be the happiest, and most important day of their lives.

You would've never thought that any young couple could see all the good, compassion, and love in the world all in the eyes of the other.

You would've never thought a late night pillow fight, would keep them laughing for hours.

You would've never thought they'd ever make it through a night watching television, without becoming wrapped up in each others arms.

You would've never thought she could ever love or admire one man that much.

You would've never thought he'd ever be able to sleep through the night without kissing her gently on the forehead, or mumbling "Love You.." as he rolls towards her pulling her close.

You would've never thought such a simple life in that small Florida town, with just each other, would ever be enough.

You would've never thought they'd have their own business building airplanes.

You would've never thought he'd work so very, very hard in order to give her the world.

You would've never thought that five years later, his planes would



take him away from her forever.

You would've never thought that to her, life no longer mattered;  
that she could feel so empty and lost.

You would've never thought that her life could be shattered so  
quickly with the ending of his.

You would've never thought such a beautiful and loving marriage  
could be reduced to only sweet memories in a matter of seconds.

You would've never thought she'd imagine holding him at night, only  
to awaken in tears because he's no longer there.

You would've never thought she could ever miss one man that much.

You would've never thought he'd love her so very much, that he'd  
free her to love again someday.

You would've never thought she'd ever have to spend an anniversary  
alone.

You would've never thought God would allow her to be with him in  
her dreams.

You would've never thought with God's grace, his great love for her  
would penetrate all timely barriers, making his presence known to her  
long after his death.

You would've never thought that her beloved angel, through God, has  
promised that he would hold her again one day.

You would've never thought that their vows of forever love,  
four years ago today, would still show through so bright and  
true.

You would've never thought I could ever be so proud as the  
day when I became your wife... thank you for all the happy times,  
and loving memories! Happy Anniversary baby!

In loving thought,

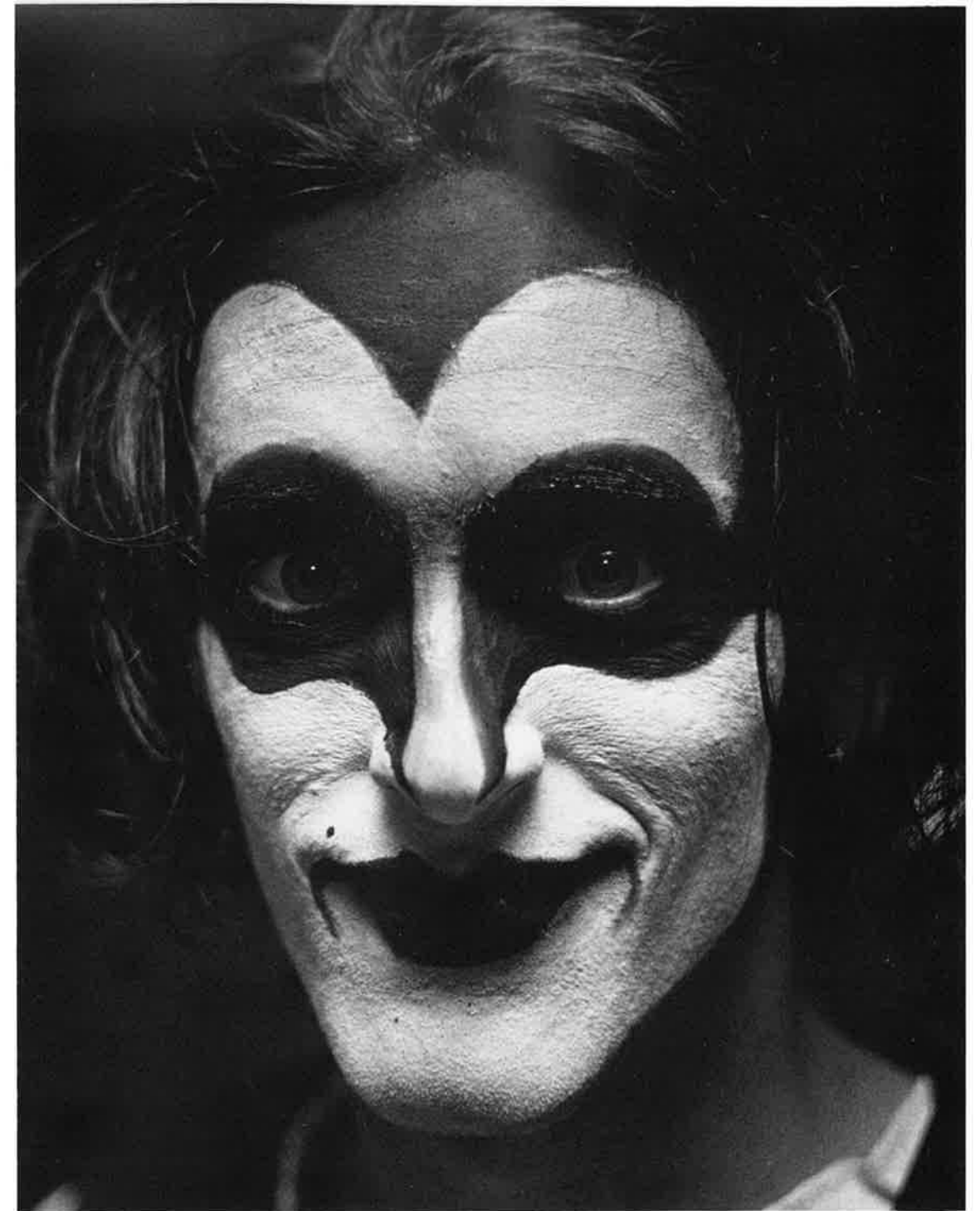


Mrs. Brian E. Ankrom

This poem is dedicated to the  
memory of my loving husband  
Brian. . .with all my love darling,  
until we meet in heaven...

Your loving wife,

Julie



Untitled by Ernest Pike

# Pulse

by Jennifer Allen

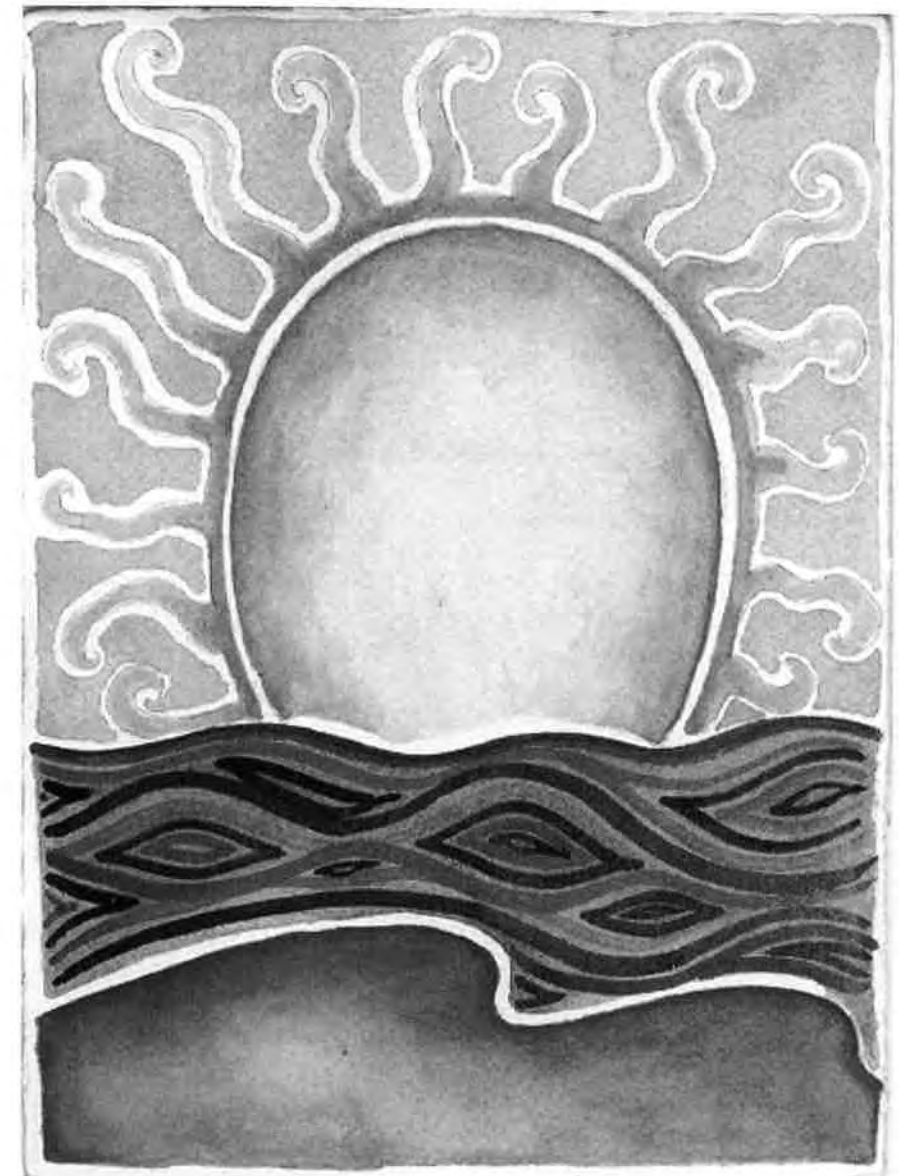
waiting on the steps of city hall  
surrounded by slabs  
of sunlight on concrete on shadows  
and planters filled with sand and cigarettes  
with my smile made for strangers  
from magazine clippings and flour paste  
while the blood test results burn a hole  
in their file cabinet on the top floor

three volatile resounding tolls  
dropping down from the bell tower  
the one i used to run to at quarter to midnight  
so i could hear the chimes from the top steps and  
look up at the haloed turret and know  
that everything was the way it should be

my watch must be fast  
ten extra minutes to wonder  
                    how much madness  
                    there is in waiting

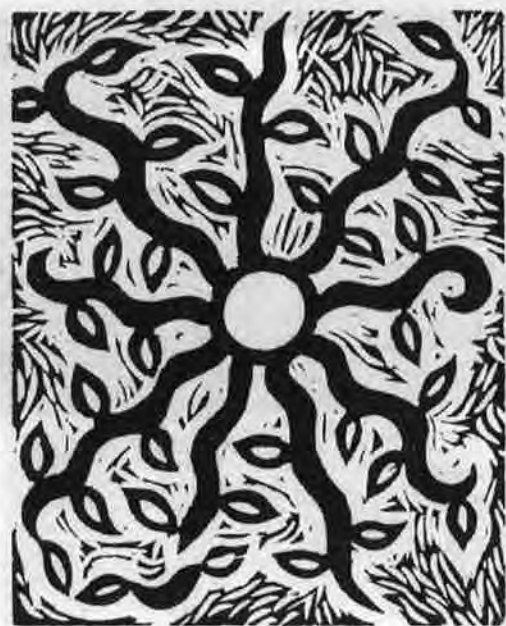
strange how these past few days i actually wanted to live  
deciding that death would be a disappointment now  
wondering as i look at the watch that is running fast  
how many seconds how many months do i have left to wait

watch curling around pulse  
both timepieces  
running together realizing  
neither their intimacy  
nor the sanity of rhythm  
like one solitary piano chord or  
an entire symphony



Bermuda Sunrise by Charity Pabst





Untitled by Charity Pabst

## He

**S**he wondered if they felt it. His presence. It was a promise He had made to her a long time ago...

"Wherever two or three are gathered, I will be there..."

By the blank looks and unconcerned faces that she met, she doubted it. She, however, was at least aware of it. There were in fact three of them gathered - albeit briefly and without purpose - and she knew that He was with them. And when the two moved away together, He was there in double strength.

It was difficult to explain to people the ideology that was in place let alone the specific nature of how this whole system worked. But in many ways, it was really quite simple.

Too simple as a matter of fact.

And that was actually the problem.

When things are too simple... people expect and look for more. When their expectation for more was disappointed and their search fruitless - they ignore the whole thing.

"Child's play, that's what it is " was the common response.

And indeed it was. A child's trust and belief was really all that was necessary. But - that childlike Faith was only the beginning.

To believe that He was everywhere and at the same time - past, present, future- could blow a few brain cells, she thought. But He helps with all that.

Once one gets to know Him and learns more about who He is - it is much easier to comprehend.

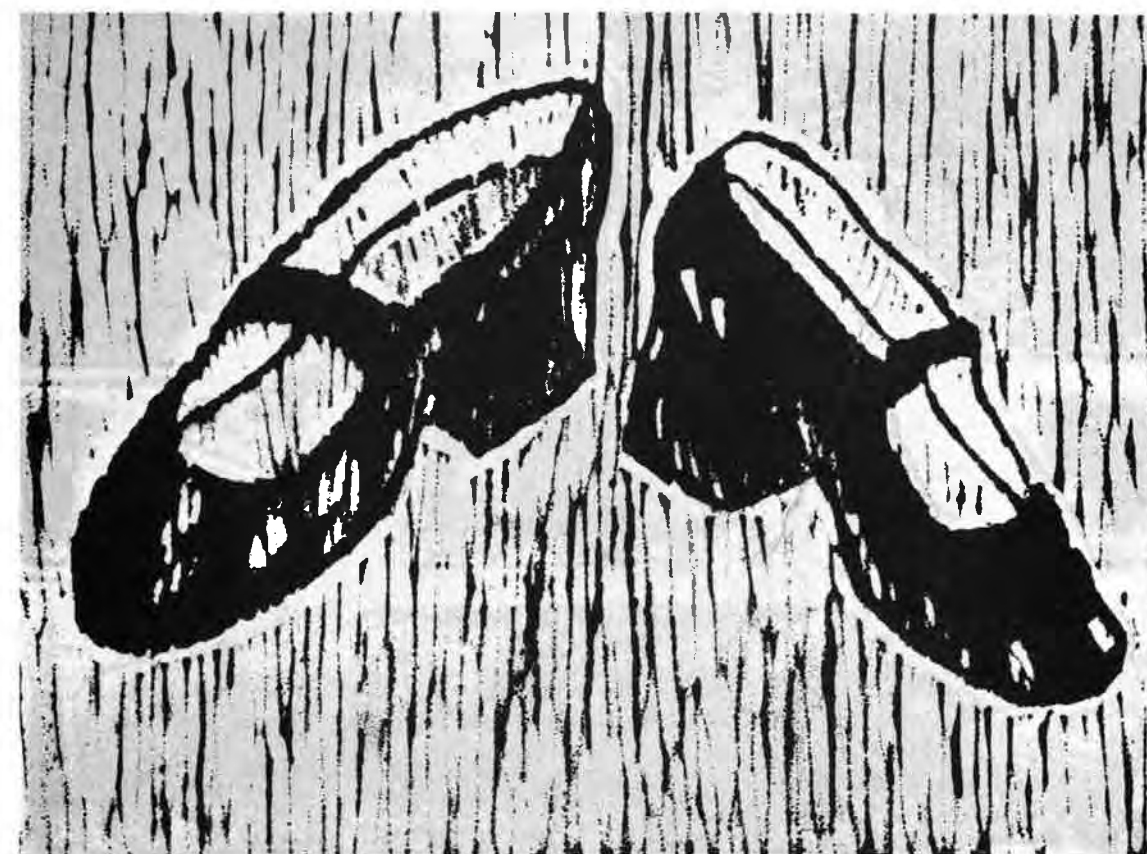
Especially when He is right there with you. And the weird part of it all was that He never left. Once He was with you - that was it . You were stuck with Him.

Forever.

The real kind of Forever.

She had learned these things as a child and grew up with them. It was

only lately, now that she was older, that she began to comprehend what it all



I Got Shoes by Susannah Sturtevant

meant. And as she understood, she grew. She grew stronger in Him and

became aware of His presence. And with this new knowledge came...

well...a Fear.

But she knew better. Fear was something that was not to be hers. He told her that. So, she reasoned that perhaps, "concern", or "alarm" or better still, "intimidation" might be more appropriate terms to use. Because as she grew, and His presence became stronger and more noticeable, she was a threat. This she realized, was vaguely, not specifically, unsettling. A threat. Also a target. And being not one to generally participate in target practice (on the practicing or receiving end) this situation and all its implications brought concern and retreat.

Right back to Him.

She was almost home now. Suddenly it struck her. She was again part of two or three. She had mentioned her concern, and He showed Himself again to her, quietly, without intrusion, but with certainty of purpose. She didn't know if the Other was aware of her; but that didn't matter. They were stronger together and He had shown His presence yet again to her in time of questions an uncertainty.

...a day later...

At the same time it was incredibly unnerving and frighteningly comforting to realize He always was with her - no matter what she did, where she went or who she spoke with - He was there. Actually, He had been there before she arrived, got there at the same time as she did, and stayed behind once she left - but never leaving her.

A bit difficult to comprehend, she mused, but an amazing reality nonetheless.

And it wasn't because He didn't have anything better to do.

Like run the Universe or something.

Oh no. She was precious in His sight. He had a vested interest in her existence and the best way to protect His interest was to never let her out of His sight.

Ever.

She was His and His alone. He had created her and she was a living product of his workmanship and influence. No detail had been left to Chance. Even down to the

shape of her lips-

light in her eyes

and the thoughts of her heart.

And she was Beautiful. It was inescapable. She didn't have anything to do

with this. She just was.

But it was her responsibility.

And unless she consulted Him about it, it was indeed a responsibility of some weight.

At some times more than others.

In those daily moments when she entered a room, walked down the street, or made her way through life.

Those who were Without Control made her existence difficult.

Sometimes alarming.

For they would not hide their eyes: their undressing of her and having their way

with her in their minds.

In the blink of an eye  
and the flash of a smile...

What a terrible thing, she thought, to be Without Control and its slave.

It made her skin crawl.

And as she grew with Him, she wondered what would attract the most attention.

His workmanship or His presence. She hoped His presence because it would deminish

the Beautiful enough for her to escape behind it.

Enough to have room to breathe.

To be "normal".

To concentrate on Him before Beautiful waned.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood..." echoed through her head as she buttoned her coat against the cold. She wondered how much was actually 'cold' that blew against her. For what one sees, is not actually what is, she reminded herself. And with these thoughts in mind, she studied those around her on her walk.

Were any of them Others?

She could not discern. However, among the usual slaves of Without Control, she became aware of something else.



Distraction.

Distraction kept most from realizing that part of themselves-not flesh and not blood.

The being part.

Looking around, she could see that all was Flesh and Blood fueled by Appetite. Flesh and Blood, when driven by Distraction, defined existence and prevented most from being.


In Him.

He and He alone could put Distraction to flight - before it was too late. Before an all too short a life time's focus on Flesh and Blood took away opportunity to concentrate on being.

The being when Flesh had dried up and Blood decayed leaving one to stare into the face of a stranger. The unfamiliar face of being that because of Distraction, was never known, never seen and remained very foreign to one's self.

But - if He was there, with you, releasing the strangle hold of Distraction, you knew.

Because it is in Him that we live, move, and have our Being.


And with these thoughts to gently remind her of how fragile Life really is, she set out on His way. 



Untitled by Hugh Chatfield



Apple Study #4 by Bethany Vogt



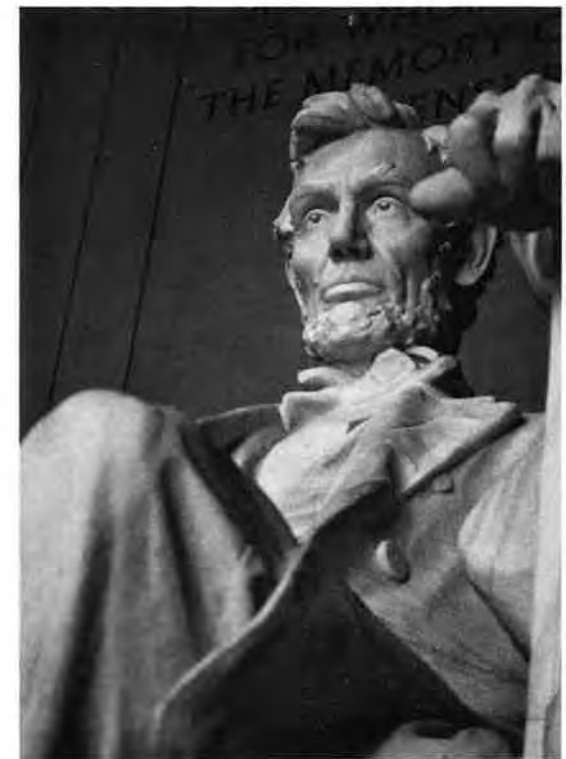
DoorStep  
Graphics

Visual  
Design  
•  
Web Sites  
•  
Desktop  
Publishing

<http://www.usm.maine.edu/~bvogt51>

(207)799-9834

Untitled by Lori Kerns



# “If That Ain’t Country, I’ll Kiss Your Ass”

by Ian Ramsey

**W**e’ve all traveled far,  
learned the importance of close,  
and found out how tough we really are.  
Cookin’ hotcakes & listen in’  
to wise old twangy songs of the past,  
on a cheap, dinged-up clock radio, so,  
like the song says...

“If that ain’t country, I’ll kiss your ass”

Me from Maine, them  
good-hearted boys from Indiana:  
very different backgrounds,  
but, still, alot of the same.  
We’re still chasing the illusion of manhood,  
puffin out our chests and drinkin’ more beer’n we should;  
Once we stop trying, we’ll find it,  
find settlement in our own adult blindness.  
It’s easy for us to be brave before we get old,  
still time to break the mold,  
build lives, walk with jaw hard-set through the dark,  
death still seems so far...

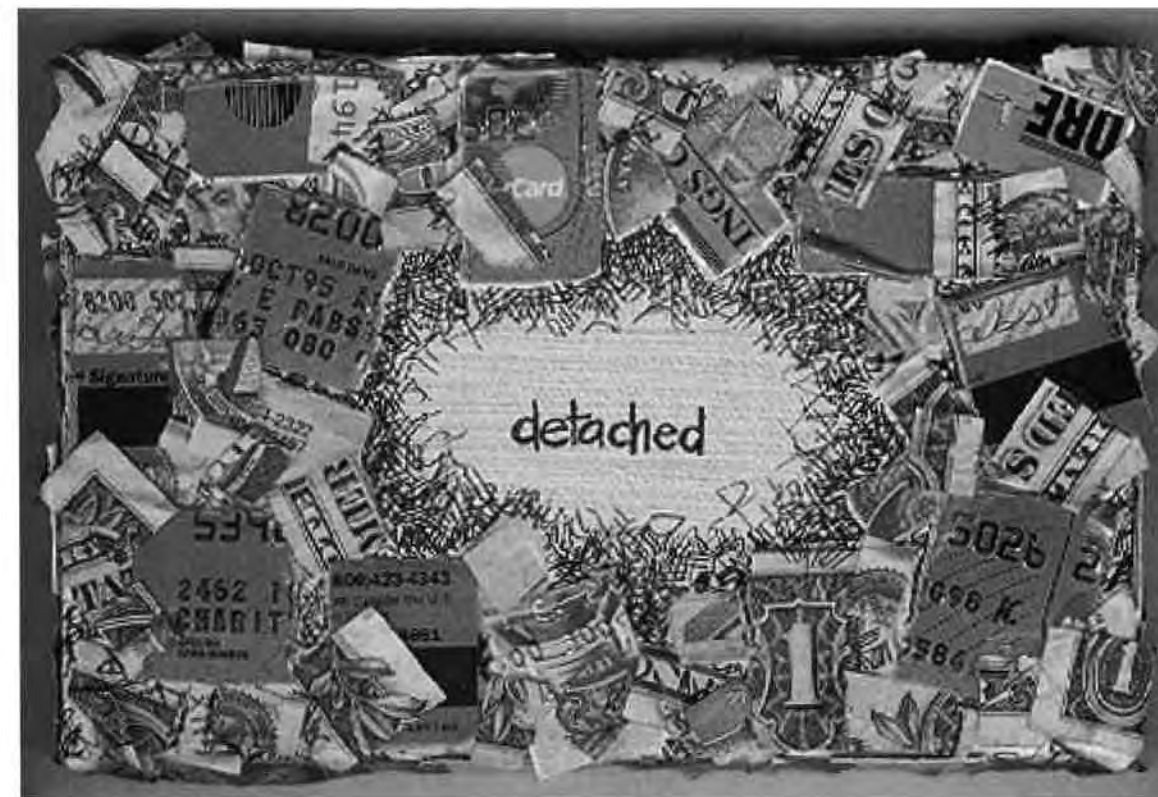
but for now,  
scarfin hot pancakes & oatmeal down  
in bargain-bin bowls and lost&found frying pans  
and everything tastes better when there’s snow on the ground.  
Pasting on peanut butter and warmed over syrup.  
no pretention, false intention,  
you’s you and that’s it.

up here, at 20 below outside,  
we all got to be a little crazy,  
they’ve got their reasons, I got mine,  
but we’re still all  
drinkin cowboy coffee,  
wearin’ workboots, jeans, & ball-caps...

“If’n that ain’t country, son, I’ll kiss your ass”

Discussing trucks, bucks, and bow-hunting  
and missing women back home,  
we talk about drinking & family far away,  
& John’s uncle, who says the best people  
in Alaska live in Nome.  
Talkin’ easily & not to fast,  
and like the song the song says,

“If that ain’t country, I’ll kiss your ass.”



Detached by Charity Pabst

# Savored Green

by Bronson Fish

**M**id-august, but cold as autumn-  
Not outside, but inside, within the ribs

For warmth we lay, trashed,  
Like her apartment, sweating the heat

When our love making had borne fruit  
Love had already turned

Bruised and browning, like over-ripe bananas  
Which like love, I savour green



Untitled by Ernest Pike

# My Town Hinckley, Maine

by Gregory L. Burns

**N**ow it's winter, but it always seems cold here.  
If I could only live in Florida,  
where flakes and frost  
Are scarier than alligators,  
You'd find me on a beach.

I don't like the cold.  
I don't like my fingers freezing,  
Lacing my ancient skates  
After stupidly saying  
I'd bring my cousins  
to the Kennebec's frozen  
fringe.

Logging trucks head  
South, piled high with  
Pine,  
Birch and oak. I'd skate all the way to salt  
If I knew the ice would hold me  
On a long trip.

# 12.

by Bronson Fish

**T**he rope dance is over  
and the odd man out swings from a lamp post,  
shadow pacing the street below.

A bug in the shade of the crevice in the corner of his blue lips,  
taste-testing spittle, froth like milk.

His battered head hangs, yet defiant;  
defeat no part in his story.



Untitled by Hugh Chatfield



# A Liberated Woman

by Catherine Brown

**P**ut away your shackles  
and throw away your chastity belt.

Burn your bra  
and your briefs while you're at it.

You are liberated

emancipated  
independent  
and delivered.

With no more repression, depression, regression,  
there is cooperation, coeducation, and cohabitation.

You have it all!

From 5 a.m. to 8 a.m.  
you can wake the  
sleeping bears,  
clean them, dress them, feed them,  
prepare lunches, and drive them  
to school.

From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
You can compete at the office with  
men who wear paisley ties and pin-striped suits.

From 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
You can pick up the children, feed them, undress them, bath them,  
help them with their homework,  
read and listen to them and tuck them in bed.  
Then you can clean tables, dishes,  
clothes, floors and finger marks  
on doors.

Don't forget PTA, school committees, projects and plays,  
seminars, presentations, lectures,  
volunteer work and workouts at the gym.

From 10 p.m. to midnight  
You can converse with your husband,  
make or fake love.

Then

You can rest.

Tomorrow

You can do it all-  
over again

Today,

You are a liberated woman!



Fortress-Eyed Ahead by Jessica Yankura

# He's Always Like This

by Kerry Peabody

Seth zipped up the fly of his jeans, the third pair he'd put on this morning. The first two had mysteriously developed holes in at least one knee and looked like they'd been used to beat out brush fires. That wouldn't do, not today. "Look your best," his mother had said, "your dad'll want you to be presentable."

He glanced at them in the full-length mirror on the back of his bedroom door. There were worn spots on the knees, where the fabric was slightly lighter than the rest. To Seth, who was eight, they looked just fine. He pulled on his favorite, blue t-shirt, with the iron-on Combat Wombat on the breast pocket. He checked himself once again, then looked at the clock by his bed. It was four-forty-five. He was late! As if on cue, his father's voice rose from downstairs.

"Move it, Seth, he said, his voice deep and insistent, "we got to hit the road!"

"Coming!" he yelled back. He scooped a pile of change from his dresser and dropped it into his pocket with a jingle. He slipped his feet into his high-tops, he could wait and tie them in the car, and grabbed his denim jacket from the end of his bed. On the way out the door he snagged the Combat Wombat graphic novel his aunt Lou had given him last night, just in case he was bored. Seth's father drove a bread truck, and he had warned his son that there were long stretches of doing nothing while they rode in the truck between stops, so he might want to bring along something to do. Although Seth couldn't imagine that it might be dull, he thought he'd better be prepared, just in case. He hurtled down the narrow back stairway, nearly tripping twice, into the kitchen. His mother was there at the table, sipping coffee, still in her robe. Her eyes were sleepy as she smiled at Seth.

"Hey, kiddo," she said, holding her arms out to him, "give me a hug." Seth slid into her grasp like a bird into its nest. She tousled his mop of dirty blonde hair. "You be a big help to your dad today, okay?" she said. Seth hugged his mother back, breathing in her smell. Seth had pestered his father for months to ride the truck with him. While it was lucky for his father that he'd been with the company long enough to have earned a route that only involved week days, it meant that Seth would need to skip school in order to ride along. But this weekend Larry Ray was on vacation, and Seth's father was filling in. Between Seth and his mom, they had talked him into letting Seth come along. "I'll miss you." she said.

"Mom!" he scolded her.

"Can we get going here?" asked his father from where he stood by the door. He wore his brown slacks and jacket, and the pale yellow shirt with the Willy Wheat logo on the pocket, like an adult version of

Combat Wombat. He was a big man, with lots of muscle that had begun to slowly give over to fat. Seth had seen him shaving in the bathroom in the mornings, his wide shoulders covered with thick, dark hair. His tight curls clung to his head like plastic, his big, square jaw was set sternly and the corners of his mouth dipped in a slight frown. He'd shaved before bed last night, and already, coarse, blue-black stubble made him look like a cartoon lumberjack. He was a man who would, if he ever stopped frowning, be handsome in a brutish sort of way. His eyes darted to the clock on the wall. It said three minutes past five. "We gotta be at Kelly's Restaurant at five thirty. Let's go." He gave Seth's mother a nod, then launched himself out the door and into the darkness, his big feet clomping across the pine porch. Seth pulled away from his mother.

"Here," she said, pushing a brown bag at him, "here's some lunch and a couple of snacks. Dad'll share a box of donuts for breakfast, I bet." Seth nodded, his eyes following his father's progress across the drive and to the car.

"Is Dad tired?" he asked. "He looks really mad."

"Your father's always like this in the morning, believe me." she said, truthfully. "He'll be alright, just let him get a cup of coffee at the terminal. You'll see."

"Okay." said Seth. The car's headlights snapped on. "I gotta go!" He snatched the bag from his mother's hand and shoved it under his arm with the comic book, the coat was slung over his shoulder. He sprinted out the door without another look at her, leaving her with a kiss hanging half-formed on her lips.

His father didn't speak once on the ride to the company terminal. Seth watched his face, cold and square in the green light of the dashboard, from the corner of his eye. Country music wailed from the radio. Seth organized his gear, rolling the comic book up and putting it in the bag with his lunch. There were two sandwiches, peanut butter and marmalade, a chocolate milk and a banana. This took all of thirty seconds. He sighed, quietly, and looked out the window. The buildings were all dark in town, all but a few that opened early. They passed only two other vehicles, then they took a left into an industrial park, and there was the big, flat yellow building where the company trucks were kept. His father pulled into the parking lot closest to the door

and rammed the shift lever up and into park. He turned off the ignition and sat there for a few seconds, tapping his big fingers against the steering wheel. After a few moments he turned to Seth.

"Ready, tiger?" he asked. He smiled, but in the dark it almost looked like he was screaming but not making any sound. "Truck's all loaded up and waiting for us. Lock the door." His father lumbered out and up onto the concrete dock. Seth hurried along behind, sack and coat clutched to his chest. Four trucks were lined up there, engines running on two of them, the warm clouds of exhaust like ghosts floating in the yellow of the mercury vapor lamps. His father moved along to the second truck in line, opened the back door and picked up a clipboard. He scanned it, counting with his finger the trays that

lined the shelves of the truck. Seth watched quietly, his arms cold in the early morning air of November. He jumped as the door behind him swung open and a young man stepped out of the building.

"Hey, Jack," he said, "got an assistant today? He going to drive while you nap in the back?"

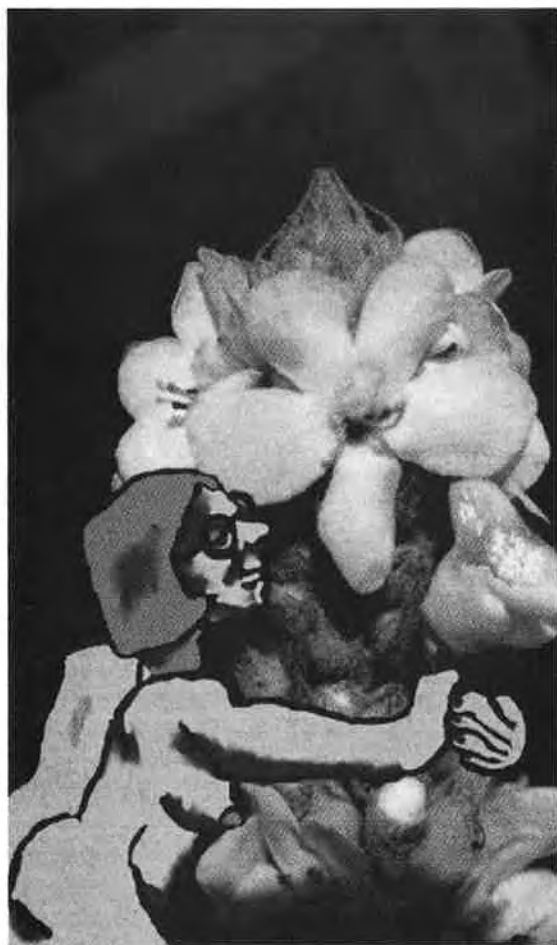
"Mornin' Bill." said his father. Bill was tall and lean, his dark hair was greased back. The front of his tee shirt read "Happiness is..." Seth hoped he'd step in front of him so he could read the back.

"This is my boy, Seth." He didn't even stop to look down. "Seth, say hi to Bill." The young man held out his hand for Seth to shake. Seth looked at it for a few moments.

"Put her there, Seth." Bill said. Seth fumbled with his gear, finally getting a hand free. The man grasped it firmly and pumped like a madman. "Keep an eye on your daddy, now. He's been getting himself into some trouble lately." He winked at Seth, who could only wonder what this meant. Why wouldn't he turn around so Seth could see the back of the shirt? Bill, young as he was, had a tooth missing, right in the front of his mouth.

"Shut your trap, Billy boy," said Seth's father, "Seth knows better." He tossed the clipboard back into the truck. "Don't you, boy?" He smiled down at Seth, who just nodded. "Get in, right here, come on." His father pointed at the open doors. Seth hopped across the little space between the truck's bumper and the cement dock. His father stepped in behind him. "Screw you, Bill." he snarled at the other man, who only laughed and waved. Seth's

**"Your father's always like this in the morning..."**



**Embracing Nature**  
by Gertrude Havu

father pulled the double doors shut and latched them. He turned, huge in the confines of the truck, looming above the boy. "Okay, here's the drill," he said to Seth, "you stay back here." He glanced around, then leaned over and picked up a stack of full bread trays. There were at least six or seven of them, stuffed with loaves of all different kinds of bread. He moved them to the space by the rear doors with a grunt, exposing a square, metal hump where the wheel was. "You sit down here whenever the truck is moving, got it? Company insurance won't cover you, you get hurt." He slapped his palm on the steel with a sharp thwack. "Some places, you can come in. Others, like the paper mill, you got to sit tight." He moved past the boy and to the front of the truck. "What's all that stuff you got there?" he asked, as though he'd noticed it for the first time.

"Lunch." Seth said. "And a book. And my coat." His father shook his head.

"You'd better put that coat on, it's cold. Jesus, boy," he said, "you must be freezing." Seth looked around for someplace to put his bag of things, and found an opening on one of the shelves. His father turned around and slid the door on the driver's side shut. There was another one on the passenger's side. They weren't like car doors; they slid back into the wall of the truck when you opened them.

"Neat door." he said to his father, who looked back only briefly as he reached down and turned on the headlights.

"Yessir." he said. "That's one of the high points of my day, that door. Plunk it, we're pulling out." Seth lurched backwards as the truck began to move, almost stumbling to the floor. He caught himself, the big piles of trays around him swaying with the truck's movement like skyscrapers in a big wind. He managed to push himself across the narrow aisle as the racks loomed above him, and sat in the narrow space his father had cleared. It was cold and hard against the seat of his pants, and every bump the truck went over traveled right up to his neck. He leaned ahead and peered around the shelves. All Seth could see was half of the back of his father's head and one hand on the big steering wheel. His father reached down and pushed a cassette tape into the dashboard player, and country music, weak and tinny, wafted back to Seth's ears. He sighed. It was too dark to read. He found that if he leaned to one side and pressed his face against the end of the shelves, and slid his buff up against the trays on the other end of his seat, he could almost, but not quite, get comfortable. Before he knew it, he was sound asleep.

The truck wasn't moving. Seth's eyes opened and he sat up straight. It was cold. He leaned forward and looked around. The sliding door was open at the front, as well as one of the back doors. Soft, morning light, filtering through a layer of gray clouds, lit the interior of the truck. He got up and walked to the front. They were in the parking lot of a small diner. The lights were on inside, Seth could see his father standing in there, an empty bread tray dangling in one hand, talking to a fat man with an apron and a flannel shirt on. They laughed, but Seth couldn't hear it. The front of the truck had a deep well where you stepped to get out the door, and right in the middle, right next to where the driver's seat was, there was a big, sort of

square, sort of round hump that stuck out from the bottom of the dashboard and poked towards the back of the truck. It was metal, just like almost everything else. It was as high as Seth's chest, and there was a lid, held down with four spring clips, two on each side. Seth laid his hands on it. It was warm, so warm compared to the truck that he turned around and, with his back to it, jumped and landed on his butt on top of it. The heat spread up through him, making him feel so, so good. He sat there, feet dangling, and watched his father and the man talk for a few more moments. He looked out through the windshield. From here he could see the words Kelly's Restaurant, on a sign above the door, and beneath that, in smaller letters, "Breakfast or dinner, YOU'RE always the winner!" This was the first stop, he now knew. Good, he hadn't missed anything. There was a clunk from the back of the truck, he hadn't seen his father slip out of the building.

"Hi Dad," he said, and waved. The man's head snapped up, he obviously expected Seth to still be sleeping.

"Get off of there," he said, "that's the engine cowlings. You'll get burned." He pulled himself into the back of the truck.

"It's not hot," Seth said, "it feels good."

"It will be, once I get back on the road. Jesus, I thought I told you to stay back there?" He jerked a thumb towards Seth's nook as he slid by him and into his seat.

"I woke up and you were gone. I thought..."

"Well, do as your told, alright? I don't want you getting hurt, is all." his father said, before Seth could finish. "Now come on, time's a wasting." Seth pushed himself from his warm seat and started to the back of the truck. "Wait." his father said. He stopped and looked up. His father had pulled a small plastic cup of orange juice with tin foil across the top from his pocket. "Here," he said, "this is yours." He reached around and pulled a box of donuts off the shelf. "You like cinnamon frosted?" he asked.

"Mm-hmm." said Seth. "But the white powder ones are better." His father shook his head slightly, but tossed that box back and groped for another. It was plain.

"Well, hell, son," he said, "don't just stand there, help me." Seth stepped up and found the kind he liked, way in the back, and pulled a box out. He handed it to his father. "Nah," he said, turning back in his seat, "you go ahead. I'll wait a while. Now go

on, get back there and settle in." Seth moved back and sat down, donuts and juice in hand, as the truck lurched off again.

The next stop was a little store, all by itself on a stretch of highway in the woods. Seth wondered why anyone would even put a store here. The truck pulled to a stop, his father lumbered out of his seat and looked at his clipboard.

"Damn Larry," he said, "he hasn't written orders down or nothing for half of these places." He sighed, looked out the window at the store. "Little place, I guess it can't be too bad, right?" Seth nodded up at him, confectioner's sugar ringing his mouth, orange juice on his t-shirt. It was a rough ride in the back. "Grab a couple of those loaves there in the yellow," said his father, pointing to a stack beside Seth, "and give me a hand." Seth bounded to his feet, happy to be helping out. His father was throwing some things into a tray, donuts and cakes and some bread. "I'm going in, get two of those, hurry up about it, and come on in." With that, he propped the tray on one hip, opened the slider, and stepped out of sight. Seth turned back around.

The stack of trays reached nearly to the ceiling, but the yellow wrapped bread was right at eye level. The trays stacked tightly, but there was a space about three inches high where Seth could reach in and grab the wrappers. He did, and tugged, but the bread wouldn't come out. He looked around, looked out the door, but his father was inside. He couldn't pull the bread out, not without squishing it. Hurry, his father had said, hurry up about it. Seth was nervous, he didn't want to make his father mad, not on the second stop of the day. He went back to the stack of trays. Maybe, he thought, he could push up on the ones above it, and open the side enough to pull out two loaves. He wouldn't need to lift it far. He stood close to the stack and put his right hand on one side of the opening, and pushed. It was heavier than he thought it would be, and barely budged. He put his left hand on the other side. He pushed. The stack came apart as if on hinges, the front edge lifting, the back leaning to rest against the stack behind it. Now that it was up, he could hold it there with one hand. With the other, he pulled out the bread, one loaf at a time, and dropped it to the floor. Suddenly, the trays twisted, one of the back corners had come apart. He gasped as the whole thing teetered and nearly fell, he let it slam back down together, pinching his finger in the process but hardly noticing it. The pile yawed wildly and he



thought for sure it would fall, but it didn't. He stood there, panting, eyes wide. After a very few seconds his heart slowed back down and he knew he'd better hurry up with the bread. He grabbed the two loaves and jumped out the door.

Inside, his father was standing in front of the cash register, arguing with the man behind it. His dad's arms were folded and his feet were spread apart, like when he was angry, or when he was having a 'tough talk' with Seth's mother. The man behind the counter had a red neck and face and his lips were big and blubbery, and he was shaking a finger at Seth's dad and almost yelling.

"Damn it," he said, "I don't care how you do it, I want the credit. I ain't no big business, and four or five boxes of donuts might seem like shit when you've got a truck full, but I ain't paying for stale goods." He slammed his hands to the surface of the counter. Seth thought the man's head might burst, it was so red and he was breathing so hard.

"And I can't give you credit without the returns." his father said. "Larry's told you that, I know."

"Bullshit, Larry has." the man continued. "Larry knows damned well that I ain't gonna try and screw him out of ten dollars worth of merchandise. You think I'm lying?"

"No," said Seth's father, "I didn't say that. It's just that..." The man pointed to the door with a finger like a sausage.

"Take your ass out of here, and tell Larry that he don't need to bother comin' on Monday. I'm tired of you half-assed delivery boys trying to screw a man out of every damned dime he's got. The Country Pride rep'll be by this week, and I think maybe they'll be just as happy as can be to get my business." Seth's father tried not to smile at this, but only partly held it back.

"Look, Bill," he said, "now you know I didn't mean nothing. I'm just trying to do my job, just like you are. Shit, Country Pride doesn't even come out this way. They aren't going to shift a route for you, you know that. Besides," he said, "you've never seen stale goods until..." But now the man was in no mood to listen to a sales pitch.

"By God," he said, and he said it G-A-W-D, all drawn out and snarly, "I ain't got to listen to you tell me I ain't good enough for your competitors to sell to, no sir. You just haul ass," he spat, "and I'll be giving your manager a call, you can bet on it." Seth's father started to say something, his face was getting red now, too, but he held his tongue.

"Okay," he said finally, "fine. Give him a call, Bill, go ahead. I'll give Larry your message." He picked up the empty tray at his feet and turned, and saw Seth for the first time. "Out." he said, sternly, pointing to the door, cheeks crimson.

"But," Seth said, holding up the two loaves of bread, "you said..." His father put a hand on his shoulder and pushed him towards the door, not hard, but not easily either.

"I know what I said, Seth" he snarled, "and right now I'm saying move." Seth stumbled out the door, and had to hurry across the gravel drive to keep ahead of his father's heavy, crunching foot-steps. His left foot came down in an ankle deep puddle from last night's rain, soaking his sock. He tried to pull open the truck door but couldn't, his father's big hand brushed his aside to fling the door open. Seth leaped up the steps and scuttled to his seat, his father slammed the door shut on its rollers, dropped into the driver's seat with a squeak of springs and started the truck.

"Stupid old son of a bitch!" snarled his father. "He's got his head shoved so far up his..." He suddenly seemed to realize that Seth was still there. "World is full of people like that, Seth." he said. "Watch out for them, cause they're always watching out for you." He put the truck in gear and pulled onto the road, and the stack of trays that Seth had moved earlier shifted. Seth watched as the top half leaned slowly out towards the center of the aisle, and he thought for a second that it wouldn't fall. Then the truck started around a curve to the left. If it had been to the right, the stack probably would have slammed back down and stayed there, at least for a little while longer. But not now. Seth watched the trays separate and loaves of bread float into the air, and heard the tremendous crash as the hard plastic flats struck and tumbled across the metal floor, wrappers and boxes burst open, donuts and slices of bread scattered like inmates from a prison riot. His father's head snapped around, and Seth yowled as the truck hit something, a bump, or a pothole, hard, maybe his father had let the tire slip onto the shoulder, Seth didn't know. The truck ground to a stop. Seth leaped to his feet, looked at his father, eyes wide.

"Shit," his father raged, "Shit! God damn it Seth, what did you do?" Seth gaped, his mouth working open and closed like a puppet's, staring at the mess. "Don't touch the trays, boy, don't you know? Now look at the mess I've got to clean up!"

He turned back to the road and the engine roared. Seth slid wordlessly back into his tiny, metal refuge. His throat hurt and his chest was hitching. A slice of bread had fallen next to his left foot, he flicked it away to land in a wet, muddy runnel of water on the floor. He watched it turn slowly brown and soggy, tears running down his cheeks. He had only wanted to help.

The rest of the day was spent in silence, at least in the truck. Seth read Combat Wombat and the Radiation Bandits all the way through, three times. His father would screech the truck to a halt, slam bread trays around, make his deliveries, and then move on. The day wore on until finally, as the sun was slowly going down behind the trees and the sky was starting to go gray, the truck pulled off the road. "Last call!" his father said, throwing off his seat belt and rising. He flipped open his order pad, packed a tray full of goods, and opened the door. "I'll be right back." Seth nodded as he left. He came to the front of the truck and stood in the well by the door, peering out the window. They were in the parking lot of a gas station. There were eight pumps. Seth watched people pumping gas. He watched a woman drop her purse, its contents exploding across the ground. She stamped her feet, and Seth smiled. Then his father was coming back out towards the truck. He stopped. He looked at his watch. He looked at the truck, Seth ducked down quickly, not wanting to be caught spying, then slowly peeked back over the edge of the window. His father turned and went back to the door of the station. There was a pay phone there. He dug his wallet out and searched for something, then put it back. Overhead, the long, narrow fluorescent lights under the awning were coming on. He picked up the receiver and dialed. Seth watched, his father said a few words that Seth couldn't hear, then waited some more. Then he was talking again, his free hand gesturing and his left foot tapping on the cement of the sidewalk. He grinned, nodded, and hung up the phone. Seth darted back to his seat and threw himself down just as the door was yanked wide and his father bounded in.

"Okay, Seth," he said, sliding the empty bread tray back towards him, "one more stop." He threw himself into the driver's seat.

"I thought you said this was the last stop?" said Seth.

"Change of plans, tiger," said his father, starting the truck, "got to make a special delivery over in

Rayburg. My favorite customer." He glanced at the big side mirror and pulled onto the road, the diesel engine rattling.

"Oh," said Seth, disappointed. He was ready to go home. Instead, he just nodded and went back to his reading.

It was nearing dark as they drove into town. All Seth could see from where he sat were the tops of telephone poles and trees and the roofs of buildings. He filled in the rest himself. Maybe Rayburg was a neat place with things like a race track and a fair and maybe a pet shop, but when his father pulled off the road and into the parking lot of a medium sized grocery store, Seth stood up and saw that Rayburg was just as gray and boring as every other town they had visited throughout the afternoon. His father turned off the truck. He grabbed a tray of bread from the rack behind him. The truck seemed much bigger now, with just empty trays and a few loaves of stale bread littered at the back end.

"I'll be a few minutes, Seth." his father said.

"You want to help?" Seth perked up at that..

"Sure, Dad," he said, and stood up, "what can I take?" He stepped up to his father and looked up at him, pleased with the chance to make up for his mess of the morning.

"No," said his father, pointing his chin towards the back of the truck with a motion like a cargo ship turning, "you stay put. Stack up those trays at the back, and put all the stales in this shelf here." Seth's heart dropped. His father nodded to the top shelf on the right. "I'll be out in ten, fifteen minutes. You ought to have time to finish up by then. Okay?" Seth wanted to go in, to help with the shelves, to say hello to the people in the store, but he knew he was



only getting what he deserved. He'd screwed up, and his father didn't want him to do it again. "Okay," he said. His father nodded, pulled open the door, and stepped out. Seth moved to the back of the truck and began wrestling the trays into neat stacks of four or five. It only took a few minutes, and then he put all the old stuff into the top shelf. He sat down, chin in his hands. He waited for a few more minutes. He had to go to the bath room. He waited. A little switch flicked somewhere inside him, the urge to pee became a pain. He waited still, legs squeezed tight. He could wait. He could do that, they'd be home in an hour. He could hold it.


Ten minutes later his father still wasn't back. Seth could hear voices as people walked around the outside of the truck, through the parking lot. He didn't want to get up from his seat because he truly thought he might wet himself. He squirmed. It hurt, it hurt bad. He couldn't wait, he didn't think he'd be able to last another second. Frantically he stood and felt a tiny dribble in his pants. He was nearly in tears when he stepped down from the back door of the truck and onto the pavement. He looked around. The store was on the other side of the truck, on this side was the road and a couple of parked cars. No one was around. It was dark. He stepped to the corner of the truck, zipped down his fly, and peed for nearly a minute on the back tire. One man walked by the front of the truck but he didn't even see Seth in the dark. Finally it stopped, and Seth, suddenly embarrassed, zipped his pants up. His father had been gone a long time; he must have found that they needed a lot of help inside. Seth came back around the truck. He was supposed to stay here. But, he'd done what his father had asked, and maybe if he went in he could do more. Yes, that was right, he could go in and help even better.

The front of the store was about thirty feet away. He started for it, but then saw the alley directly in front of him. About forty feet down the narrow way there was a door ajar, light spilling out and making frightening shadows of the trash bins and old display racks stacked there. His father used the rear entrance most times, especially in bigger places like this. Seth looked around. He walked down the alley to the door. He could hear voices inside, mumbling. He stood close to the door, not getting in the light, just listening. One of the voices sounded like his father's. Maybe he should just go back and wait like he was supposed to, but then he'd never be able to make up for this morning. He

had to go, his father wouldn't get mad at him for helping. He couldn't. With a look of grim, eight-year-old determination on his face, Seth pulled the door open and stopped in his tracks.

It was a store room, full of crates of lettuce and oranges and boxes of cans and piles of paper towels and all sorts of things. On the wall opposite the door that Seth stood in there was a long bench, littered with pens and cardboard 'special of the week' signs and rolls of tape. A coat rack, heavy with pale green smocks, stood next to a set of double doors, like a guard at a palace gate. His father was there, or at least, it was his father's uniform, his shoes, his brown slacks and his black, black hair, but his back was to Seth, so he never did see his father's face. He was wrapped tightly in the arms of a woman, also whose face Seth never saw, but he saw the red tangles of her hair. He saw her legs, he saw the man's hand move up and down her thigh, and he saw her fingers with their long, red nails as they rubbed the shoulders of the big stranger in the bread man's uniform. She was giggling something, and the man with Seth's father's voice was whispering hoarsely back to her. Seth stood there for several very long seconds. If either of them had looked in his direction, they couldn't help but have seen him, but they didn't. Seth stood there for a long time, and then he backed away into the alley. He took three, shuffling steps towards the truck and then he ran. He climbed up in, he pulled the back door shut, and he closed his eyes, trying hard not to think about what he had seen. He sat there, quietly, patiently, suddenly not concerned at all with when his father might get back in the truck. He picked up his comic book and wrung his hands around it. He didn't know how long he waited, but then the truck dipped and his father hopped in the front door. He had the empty tray in his hand, he dropped it to the floor and slid it back with his foot.

"Good job," he said, indicating the stacks of trays in the back. He zipped the front of his coat up. "Ready to go home?" Seth nodded. The book had grown damp in his hands, the cover was torn.

"Yes sir." he said, looking up at his father in the dim light. He didn't recognize the handsome man that smiled back at him. 

# Gravity

by Shayne Worcester

Knowing if you touch me,  
I will fly  
into a thousand pieces,  
you make yourself a hose,  
that everything blows through

pinhole flat-disc invisible,  
a body thrown against glass

a yellow slicker girl,  
spinning in a convenience store  
that she doesn't want to leave

undone by a  
yet undone sun,  
we are visible only  
in flames.

Seen and unseen,  
swallowed and occupied,  
unlit, unrelenting  
gravity.



Tulips by Bethany Vogt

# BLUEPRINT

by Jessica Yankura

Some people do. Some people don't. Many people simply do not care.

She grasps the life in front of her with both hands; to surrender to the winds means coasting through life, working nine to five without a care.

Death comes slowly to those who let life pass them by.

Youth cares; the young never die, right? Right?

Maybe occasionally, in car accidents, on snowy roads at night.

But not the strong, who spit in the face of the undertaker.

She can't not care. She cares too much. She pines for the days of real youth, life without bills and people leaving.

Dust. We all eventually turn into dust. Right?

Work hard today so that we may live in spirit and image eternally. Is that what we're supposed to do?

Why don't we all just do it?

Life gets in the way of doing what we really want to do.

Does that sound right?

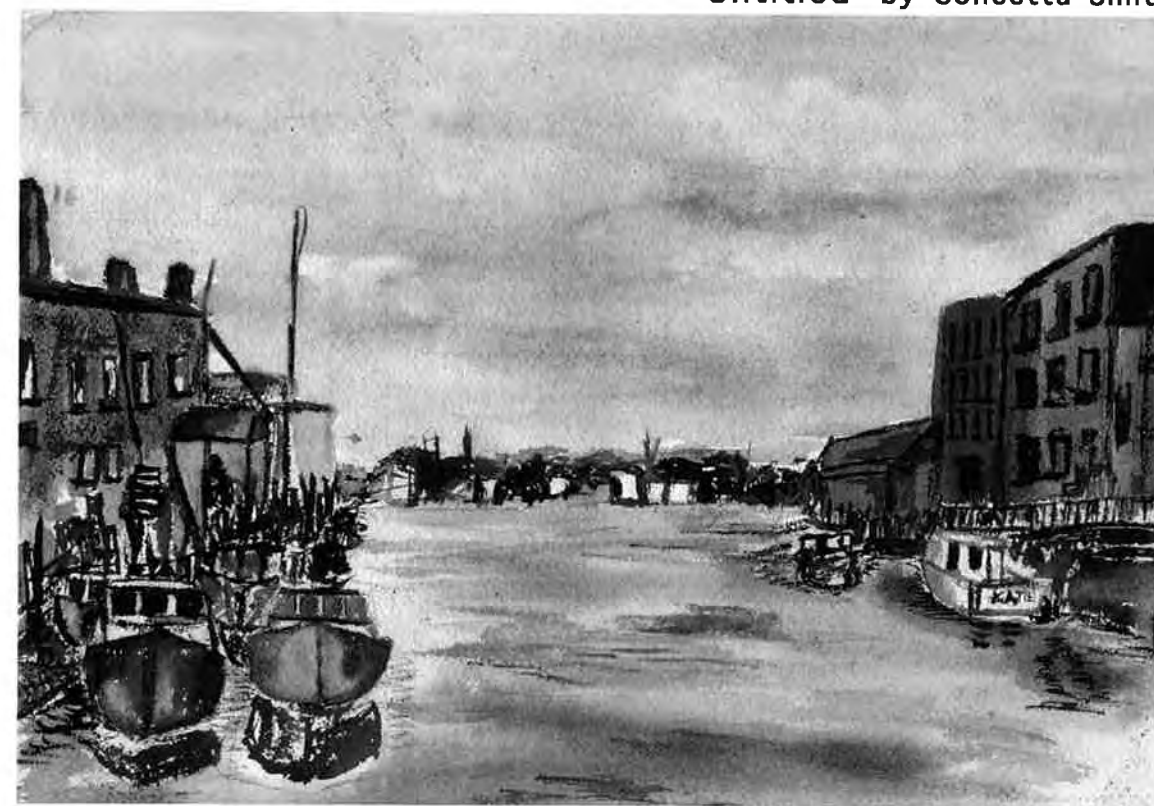
As long as she knows what she's doing.

As long as she holds on tightly and doesn't sacrifice

her needs and desires,

she'll be okay. Right?

Untitled by Concetta Smith





# Untitled

by S.M. Hall

**D**ave was deep. Dave was sensitive. Dave was an artist.

Dave thought, boy, am I deep and sensitive and artistic, now, if only I were a little taller...

Dave muddled over this in profound artistic anguish for many minutes as he prepared to drive his large, expensive BMW to his office where he suppressed his churning, sensitive artist's soul and made millions of dollars reselling real estate at inflated prices. Yes, Dave had it all: money, power, prestige and a deep, burning sensitive artist's soul that caused him to look out over the city late at night and wonder what deep, sensitive things his soul would reveal when, in the fullness of time, they chose to reveal themselves to him. Yes, Dave was deep, and he was sensitive.

Soon, Dave, like many deep, sensitive artists of the past, became enmeshed in a web of duplicity which was ultimately disentangled by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Dave found himself one day sitting between two sheriffs, heading off to prison. Dave thought deeply about this, and with sensitivity remarked, "I am going the way of Alexandr I. Solzhenitsyn, Marquis de Sade, Cervantes . . . ."

Or Oscar Wilde. For, soon, Dave's cell-mate took that term literally, rolled Dave over and found out how deep and sensitive Dave really was.

After all, the path to great art is studded with thorns that cannot be felt while driving a twenty-thousand-dollar Super Jeep with knobby tires. 

Untitled by Ernest Pike



## Two Brothers

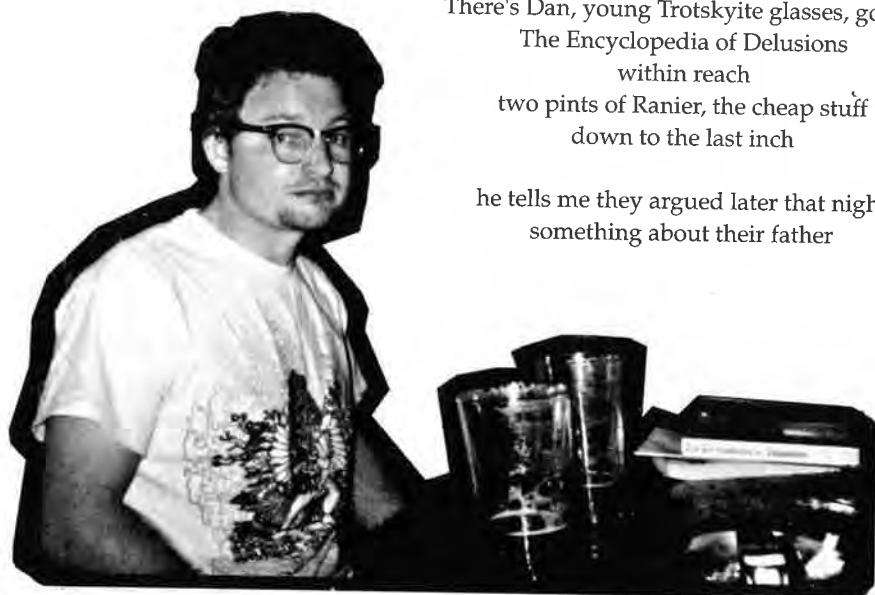
by Jennifer Lunden



at the Blue Moon  
see, there is Eric with his wedding band  
pack of cigarettes unopened  
the remains of the other crushed on its side  
a pint of Sierra Nevada held at an angle  
the warmth of the beer flushed in his face  
The Idiot, Dostoevsky's, on his right

There's Dan, young Trotskyite glasses, goatee  
The Encyclopedia of Delusions  
within reach  
two pints of Ranier, the cheap stuff  
down to the last inch

he tells me they argued later that night  
something about their father



## What Remains

by Laurie A. Glidden

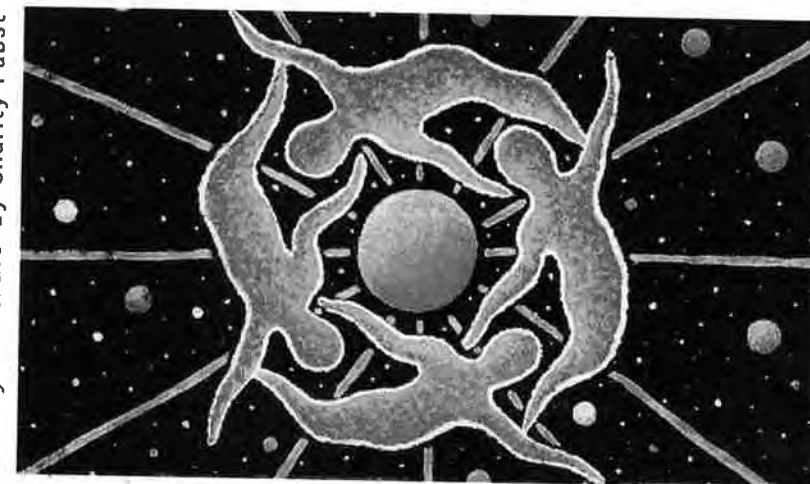
It wasn't so long ago- though at least fifteen years have passed, that I was running across a border of lilies, under apples trees, and down the slope of Piper Brook's banks to splash in the water with my mother. My mother was the divine center of my world then.

I used to lay against her chest while she napped. It was a struggle to mount her large bed, but I was determined. I would crawl up, careful not to wake her, and lay my head on her ribs, to listen intently to the comforting sound of her heart beating.

remain as much my young-mother as she would remain my biological-mother, no matter how much time passed. Now, we live apart, and the differences between my mother and I have become greater-more obvious. It's hard to be as happy and free with her, as I was not all that many years ago, and I can't name the reasons why. I was assured that our relationship wouldn't change. It has, and I am afraid of that old truth- that she will leave me, for more than the weeks that lay between available times to visit.


Tears charge from behind my eyes when I think

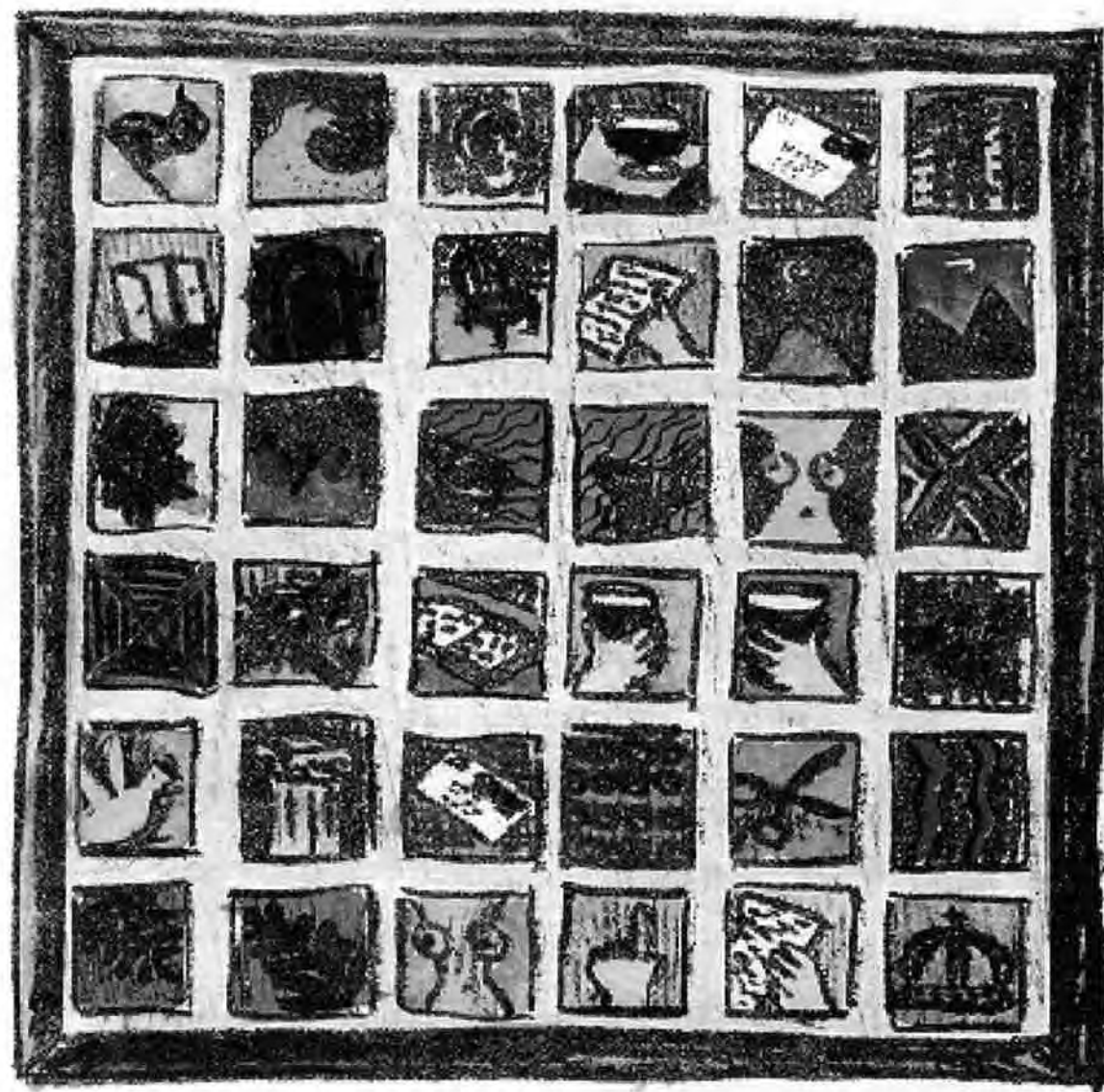
Family Portrait by Charity Pabst



I remember telling her once that she would live forever. She said she couldn't, that, "Every one dies someday," and I think there was a bit of laughter in her tone so she wouldn't scare me with that truth. I retorted that she *would* live forever, in that way that children do when they think the world is theirs to order. She asked why... because; I loved her and I wouldn't let her die.

Now, as I look on, I see that she has grown older, breaking the order of things as a child firsts understands them to be. It scares me. It seems that I never stopped believing that my mother would

of how she looked in that puzzle of sunlight and shadow at the brook, and that evening, in the t.v. light, when I told her she would be immortal. I've lost it all to time. What hurts me most is that there were moments that I thought I didn't care if she died. Now, I fear her death as much as my own. We aren't as close, but nothing can erase those memories. For all our differences, I will always love her in that deep child-like part of my heart. I don't think she knows, and it's hard to try to tell her, but I hope she can remember the times I *could* tell her, and that I still feel the same. 



The Letter by Susannah Sturtevant

## The Magic Horse Lady

by Michelle Locker

The last time I saw Annie Dixon I was riding the chestnut mare, Hypatia, and Annie was telling me to sit still in the saddle, stretch my legs long around the mare's sides, and keep my hands quiet. It was New Year's Day, 1987, just outside Philadelphia. Icicles hung down the branches of bare trees all through Chester County, and little dots of ice were stuck on the whiskers of the horses exercising in the indoor ring. It must have been five degrees, but despite the painful cold and the hard, rutted ground, the ring was crowded. The breath of horses and riders was fogging up the air, and the horses took short, choppy steps to protect themselves from the frozen ruts in the ground. It was easy for a horse to get a hoof caught in a frozen ridge of dirt or in a crater-like depression and go right down on his knees. We hopped on these cold stiff horses, who surely would rather be warmly under their blankets munching hay — Shelley, Sarah and I— perhaps because we knew it might be our last chance to hear Annie.

Annie stood on the ground in the middle of the ring and calmly, softly gave pointers to me. She was a big girl, close to six feet tall, with thick arms and legs, and a white, pudgy pumpkin-type face that revealed very little. The long, fine blonde hair she once had was gone now, and she covered her baldness with a bright red bandana, and a red wool hat over that. She had an unlikely body for an accomplished equestrian, too big to fit the stereotype of the thin, angular type that won at horse shows.

Annie had a special affection for the jumpy Hypatia, who had thrown so many other riders. Her specialty was bringing along difficult horses, horses that developed bad habits or had too much spunk for less talented riders. Hypatia had such a long,

swinging, stride that I felt like jelly oozing all over her back and her flanks. Annie's advice: keep still, keep tall, keep quiet. After the ride, after Hypatia was blanketed and back in her stall I hugged Annie hard, felt her massive body. I said "good luck, it'll be fine." She was going to Pittsburgh the next day for a bone marrow transplant. She had leukemia.

I had first met Annie eight years before, when her father, Saunders Dixon, hired me to teach at Thorncroft Equestrian Center, his barn in Paoli, Pennsylvania. I had plopped myself into a world of strangeness. I was a Jewish kid from Brooklyn who had not even gotten on a horse until I was twenty years old. My father dyed sweaters in a factory and was a dedicated democrat and union man. I grew up swimming in Coney Island and playing paddleball in the park up the street. I rode trains, not horses, and the "country" to my family was Pine Hill Hotel in the Catskill Mountains, where we sat by the pool by day and I flirted with busboys and waiters at night. Chester County might as well have been on another planet. It was full of \$500,000 houses, each with private barns and well-bred horses and acres of pastureland. The people were mostly blonde, protestant, Republican, with impeccable manners. The kids had grown up with ponies and were jumping fences by the age of four. They had jodhpurs and paddock boots and trophies and mothers with wood-panelled station wagons who drove them from private school to riding lessons to horse shows.

I had dreamed of being a successful and expert horsewoman, of a rural and dreamy existence outside of city sidewalks and nine to five jobs. I took a three-month course in Long Island, New York, got



a teaching certificate for riding, and began applying for a teaching job anywhere on the East Coast. I was anxious to get out of Brooklyn, where I was feeling trapped. I was twenty-five years old, had quit college and hitchhiked around California, had camped in the Rocky Mountains, gone to concerts in San Francisco's Fillmore West, worked as a maid and a waitress, and taken drugs. I was searching for something, without direction, knowing only I wanted out of Brooklyn and the life that my neighbors were all living.

Winter was just ending when I arrived at Thorncroft. There was still snow on the ground and a raw, gray feeling in the air. People had been riding in the indoor ring for months, and everyone was anxious to get out on trail. I was given a smart, devilish athletic chestnut mare named Foxy Lady to ride. She was a clean, high jumper, but if she didn't want to jump she'd stop her galloping body so fast that I just flew right over without her. I fussed over her in the barn, curry combed her red body endlessly, fed her carrots and let her nuzzle my face. It was how I pretended I really knew how to ride her. It was how I pretended I really had control in my new life as a riding instructor at Thorncroft. The truth was, I was a nervous rider, and the certificate I had earned gave me a false sense of confidence in what I could do.

One day, only a week after I was hired, I rode Foxy out of the indoor ring and onto the gravel driveway. The wind was howling through the trees, upsetting Foxy, who was jumpy, as if the sounds in the trees were demons out to kill her. Every time the wind rustled the trees she reared up on her hind legs, each time a little higher. I was doing my best to stay calm, hide my fears, and sit technically correct. Could I handle Foxy on a windy day? Could I cut it?

Just as I thought I had kicked her forward and gotten myself firmly adjusted in the saddle there came a huge howl of wind, almost snapping off the branches of trees, knocking down fences in the outdoor ring. A cow mooed in the field across the way, and some of the horses out loose in the paddock galloped wildly in response, their hooves sounding like thunder on the frozen, bare ground. She reared straight up — a less athletic horse would have gone over backwards. I slid down her back and her haunches and landed hard on my head on the gravel driveway. There was blood, a ride to the hospital, and several stitches in my head. Mr. Dixon and Sharon, the head instructor who was my boss,

fussed over me, making sure I was okay. I was deeply ashamed and embarrassed and questioned why I ever took on this physical challenge in such a foreign world.

It was clear I was in above my head as a rider. And the people I had around me were not the warmest and friendliest. Sharon, the head instructor, and Annie, the boss' daughter, each had their own little kingdom of worshipers. There was obvious tension between them — they were rivals, with different philosophies, different styles. They never spoke to each other. Navigating these sensitive barn politics was tough for me, because more than anything I wanted a pat on the shoulder, someone to say "you're doing okay." Annie rarely smiled or looked anyone in the eye, and certainly didn't talk to me, as I was Sharon's student. She looked stern, kept her mouth closed in a grim, set way that led me to think of her as a stuck-up snob. I used to think she was smirking at everyone, barely able to conceal haughty laughter. Both women were formidable, tough, silent. I would busily do my job and try to make small talk with students. I was feeling pretty lonely.

As head instructor Sharon was my boss and my own riding teacher. She was a serious and authoritarian woman, a dressage expert who carried herself with an air of supreme knowledge. She wore her light brown hair pulled severely back into a bun. She was tall and very thin, wore round granny glasses, and was full of credentials from the best riding schools in the south. She had a perfect riding body, a long leg on a horse. Sitting like a queen on a chair in the bleachers she dispensed horse advice. She taught to ride with a tight rein and a heavy seat, and produced students who rode with pursed mouths and sour faces. I seemed always to be fighting with my horse under Sharon, always nervous, never good enough.

As I rode for Sharon I would watch Annie give a lesson in the other half of the ring. A number of teenage girls and older ladies adored Annie. Her horses looked happy and free and her riders were having fun. Annie stood in the middle and walked a smaller circle while the students circled around her as she quietly gave orders to them. Her jeans were tight and she wore brown suede chaps over them, a crew neck sweater monogrammed with her initials, and her blonde hair tied back. Her face was plain, pale and fleshy. The horses circling her were moving on with big strides, in steady rhythms, and looked

like they'd be happy to do so forever. She would quietly set up a small jump and they'd trot over, never breaking stride. Her progression to bigger fences was smooth and effortless. I began to be intrigued and envious of Annie and her crowd.

Insecure as I was, something told me to hook up with Annie. I had a gut feeling that I was riding at odds with my horse, that I needed to find a different path. If I didn't do something, I was surely going to quit riding.

I was cleaning a bridle in the tack room one day. The room was small, square and crammed full of saddles, bridles, and tack trunks. There were forty or so saddles on one wall, bridles on two other walls hung up on hooks by browbands and reins. Wooden and metal tack trunks filled much of the floor space. Two hooks hung in the middle for taking apart and cleaning bridles, while a saw horse was there for soaping and cleaning saddles. It was a room full of leather — dried out, cracked hard leather, girths that were full of sweat and foam from horses' bellies, and leather that had been lovingly oiled and rubbed and was soft and pliable. Some of the bits were covered with caked-on dirt and pieces of dried grass and the metal was stained green. The room smelled like warm oil and sour sweat and old mud.

I had my bridle apart and had just put the bit into a bucket of warm water to soak the dirt off when Annie came in. She had finished riding her mare, Robin, and was carrying a bridle over her shoulder and a saddle in her hands. As usual she didn't look at me, just went about her business of putting the tack where it belonged.

"I watched you ride Robin this morning," I said. "Beautiful jumps. You make it look so easy."

Silence from her. Then she murmured, "thanks." There was that smirky grin again, the corners of her mouth were beginning to lift but she controlled them in time. She hung her bridle up, put the saddle on its hook and opened her trunk.

"Would you give me a lesson?" I bravely asked. "The way I'm riding now doesn't feel right."

Her back was to me. She was going through her trunk, looking for something, a bag of carrots maybe, or a cooler for Robin. It seemed like ages before she straightened up and turned around. "Sure," she said. She seemed enormous to me at that moment. She said nothing about my riding, or Sharon, or what she felt was wrong. She didn't ask me why. She just arranged a time for a lesson, speaking in a short, clipped way and not giving me

much of an opening for easy conversation. It was enough for me. I had made a start.

All my life I had to work at conquering my physical fears. Fears of falling, fears of dying. When I was younger and went to Coney Island my brother and I would go into the haunted houses on the boardwalk. You paid a quarter and entered a pitch-black maze to walk through. You would hear screams and wind howling and furry hands would come from nowhere to grab you, skeletons would pop out in front of your face in the dark unexpectedly and you would scream and grab the person behind you to make sure reality was still intact. I clenched my teeth and held my breath before I went through one of these haunted houses, but I did it anyway to prove my bravery to my brother. I was a girl who daydreamed a lot, and bumped into furniture because my brain was somewhere else. My parents labelled me early on as a "klutz." "Watch out, Michele's coming, grab the lamps," my father

## Untitled by Lori Kerns



would joke. Maybe it was this kind of ridicule, maybe it was the fears, that led me to take on riding, with its physical challenge and its element of danger. It was out of character for the timid girl I really was. And it was odd that I went to such a disciplined sport, with so many rules, with such a blueblood tradition. You had to dress properly at shows, wear certain colors, follow a strict etiquette. The world of horse shows was a high-class world. Yet I was a rebel, a hippie, who had hitchhiked the West Coast and proudly rejected tradition. Or was I? Was I looking to create my own tradition, something different than I was born into? Whatever I was looking for, I was unhappy, scared, out of place at Thorncroft, but I couldn't quit, yet. There was a magic about the riding that I wanted to learn.

In my first lesson with Annie I rode Clem's Friday, a dark bay thoroughbred mare who had done the horse show circuit years ago. She was an unbalanced sort of horse, heavy in the front end, always falling forward over her front feet if you held her head too tight.

It was a warm spring day and we were in the outdoor ring. The ground was dry, gravelly, dusty. Annie walked the ring picking up large pebbles and stones so the horses wouldn't trip on them, while I warmed up on Clem. There were fences all over the ring, mostly poles that had been painted red and white or green and white, and that sat at various heights in tin cups on jump standards. Annie spoke in low tones as she set up a small fence, maybe a foot and a half high, for me to jump.

"Just steer her straight with your legs, look up at the tree past the fence, keep the reins very loose and hold mane," she said.

I obeyed and Clem proceeded to go right down on her knees on top of those poles. I fell heavy onto her neck and hung on. She hadn't bothered to make the effort to jump.

"That's just what I expected to happen. Clem's not used to having to figure out how to pick up her knees by herself. She's going to have to get knocked up a few times before she figures out this is her job to get over the fence, and you're not going to help her," Annie said as she grinned. "No one's ridden her on loose rein for a while."

I laughed nervously. "Okay," I said. "Whatever you say." My words came out in a whisper.

By the second try she jumped cleanly. By the third try there was lots of air between her knees and the fence, and I really had to grab and pull on her

black mane to stay with the stretch of her long neck as she jumped bigger.

Annie had humbled me. I was a rank beginner, not much better than the students I taught. What I mostly learned from her was that I needed to admit what I didn't know. And I needed to look at my own riding, not at the horse, when things went wrong. My illusions of grandeur had been shattered. Yet I felt great relief. Start from a place of ignorance. Be open to learning. I could now drop my false sense of knowledge. I could rely on simple rules. I saw why her horses were happy.

When Annie and I went to an event together my mouth was so dry I could hardly swallow. I hated to be in the spotlight and I had to be judged in a dressage arena, gallop a cross-country course, and ride a stadium course before a crowd. We walked the course. The footing was muddy from a rain the day before. It seemed to go on forever with lots of turns and places where I thought surely I would get lost. In my worst dreams I veered off course and people stood in the field and pointed and laughed at me. Or I fell at a fence and people would have to come help me up and grab Clem's reins to keep her from running away.

Annie reminded me to keep my eyes up and just relax and trust Clem. "Don't make it a bigger deal than it is," she said. "Take it one fence at a time. Just keep the forward movement and steer her to it." Clem jumped cleanly over railroad ties, brush fences, logs, ditches, and water jumps that day. Before each fence I just looked at the horizon, sunk my heels and waited for her. I could feel her slow down and shift her weight to her hind legs to get a powerful jump.

I have a photo of Annie and me and Clem, the moment after I returned to the trailer and dis



mounted. Clem is standing with her feet apart, her ears flopping down, foamy white sweat on her neck and her tongue hanging out, looking more like a tired donkey than a thoroughbred horse. Annie is leaning on Clem's neck with her elbow, her other hand on her hip, looking big against the mare, a light brown cowboy hat on her head, a grin on her big, round face, her blue eyes sparkling. She looks completely entertained and deeply satisfied by my finishing the course. I am facing them both, an unopened beer in my hand, cheeks red from riding the course, frizzy dark hair matted to my head from the heavy helmet I wore, breathing deeply from my gallop in the wind, ready for celebration. The course had been low-level, the jumps under three feet high, nothing to be impressed about. I had rode it like the beginner I was, fairly passive. I had finished with no falls, no getting lost. I had not knocked over any lamps.

A little bit later Annie rode the course on a horse named Paprika, a small, compact, Appaloosa. They were an unlikely horse combination, Paprika small and of a breed that was generally rejected as "common", and Annie large and fleshy. But when she sat on a horse her weight was distributed exactly where it should be, and she never made extra movements on the horse's back that would annoy him or throw him off balance. She rode assertively, and set him up at exact, deliberate spots in the front of the fences.

Someone took a photo of Annie and Paprika that day at the apex of a fence. Annie made several silkscreens of the photo, each in a different color. She gave me the mauve one. It is dark and you can only make out the silhouette of horse and rider. You see the white haunches of Paprika dotted with dark spots, the large woman on his back bent forward at the waist, her chest parallel to his long neck, her hands pushed up to his ears to give his head freedom to stretch. Paprika's ears are perked forward, alert and alive to the moment, and his knees are nearly hitting his chin. It is a moment of perfect symmetry, separate from the confusions and fears and messiness of everyday life.

I was in awe of this magic horse woman who seemed to have all the answers. I was so open with her about my fears, so supplicating. I lived for

lessons with her, for those words of wisdom. She was my ticket to bravery, to something I was trying to prove to myself. The fact that she might need me too crept up on me unknowingly. Starry-eyed with my discoveries about good riding it took me a while to see who Annie the person really was.

She had difficulty with her own father, Mr. Dixon, the owner of Thorncroft. This was odd to me, because I adored Mr. Dixon. He was a long-haired Quaker about 55 who had a reputation for eccentricity among the bluebloods that I found refreshing. He was a peace activist and had made headlines by chaining himself to the IRS office in Westchester to protest his taxes going to the Vietnam war. He wore

pants too short for him, a ripped plaid shirt with missing buttons, a down vest patched with duct tape and broken glasses that constantly were falling off his face. His neighbors tolerated him as their local slightly wacky off-beat character. He had kind gray eyes but spoke very little. I had defined myself as a hippie in high school, went to protest marches, thrown rotten tomatoes at Richard Nixon's inauguration, and savored Bob Dylan records. The long-haired Mr. Dixon was like an anchor for me in this conservative world.

But Annie and her father did not really speak to each other. Mr. Dixon had been a stern Quaker, and had not allowed music or dancing in his house. He spoke little, and the Dixon family, I noticed, communicated by nods and looks. Annie was the oldest of five children. When she was a teenager, her father divorced her mother and began to have a steady stream of young girlfriends, all about Anne's age, all with long blonde hair like hers but thinner bodies. The girlfriends hung around the barn, involved in horses in some peripheral way. Despite her immense talent, her father would not give Annie the job of head instructor. He kept her on the outskirts, and joked more with her younger sisters. There was a stiffness between Annie and her father that was painful to watch. How hard it must have been for her, to be so marginalized by her father, the man with all the power in that little horse kingdom.

I became a sort of interpreter between Annie and her father. I was always the one to ask him for permission to use a trailer for a horse show or to switch teaching schedules. "Mr Dixon" I'd say,

## The long-haired Mr. Dixon was like an anchor for me in this conservative world.

"Annie and I want to school the horses at Radnor Sunday morning, so I'm calling my student and changing the time of the lesson." He'd nod and mutter something like "that's fine" while he stroked his beard and barely made eye contact. I'd run off and tell Annie there was no problem with her father. I knew the art of small talk, of breaking up silences with smiles and comments about the weather, or clothes and little giggles. In this way I helped Annie with her father.

I was different from Annie, too, when it came to men. I was obsessed with finding a boyfriend at the time. I went to bars in WestChester on Saturday nights with my roommate, Nan, and we'd drink and flirt and dance with men to deafening loud music on a floor sticky with spilled beer. In this world I felt a little superior to Annie, for she would never join us here. She was too above such bars, such music. She

didn't drink, she didn't flirt. I was into "cool" and she was prim, prudish. I kept my relationship with Annie separate from my world of bars and men. Sometimes I felt like she was another species in her prim, controlled manner. She couldn't be touched by sticky beer or men whispering jokes in her ear.

She belonged to a troupe of Morris Dancers, a dance of eighteenth century England. The dance was formal, regimented. The dancers wore white button-down shirts and red suspenders, black pants, and had white hankies in their pockets that they took out and waved at certain moments in the dance. The steps were small and technical. Sometimes they lined up, men facing women. Sometimes they made squares, weaved in and out of each other, while the fiddle music played. Sometimes the props were sticks, not hankies, and they clacked sticks together to the music, all the while bobbing up and down on their feet. The dance was similar to an Irish



Adam Smith 96

Untitled by Adam Smith

jig, or to clogging. From the waste up the dancers' were still and straight, their hands on their hips, their feet moving furiously in tiny intricate steps. They stared intently into their partners' eyes. They danced on Saturday afternoons at malls around Philadelphia. Annie soon became revered for her technical brilliance at the dance. She became the coach, in much the same way she was the coach of so many riders.

But when she wasn't riding or dancing Annie was stiff with people and couldn't really make the small talk so necessary to social interaction. She would hint at wanting a boyfriend but would admit this wasn't likely for her. Once though, she had a boyfriend for a while. A man named Philip from her Morris Dancing troupe became worshipful of her. He was tall and thin and quiet. He used to meet her at the barn and follow her around silently, his eyes cast down. She would oil a bridle in the small tack room, the smell of sweat and leather and saddle soap all mixed up, and he would stiffly put an arm on her shoulder, a bit afraid to hug her. She would not respond, hide her embarrassment, and rub the bridle a little harder while I would look away and pretend to do something else. Eventually she let him go. The pressure of talking, flirting, playing a certain kind of communication game, was, I think, just too painful for her.

I knew the flirting game better than Annie, but I had a tough time too. I finally met a man named Eric whom I fell in love with. He was a writer who actually had a small play produced in Philadelphia. He took me for rides on his motorcycle through the Chester County roads and read me poetry. I thought him to be an enormous wit and worshipped him. He was impressed with my horse world, seeing it as romantic and wild. But he didn't really want to know about all the hard work involved. When he wanted to learn to ride I gave him over to Annie to give him a lesson. She put him on Shiloh, a huge but gentle palomino who was used to carrying big men who knew nothing about horses. He laughed nervously during his lesson with Annie, and waved his arms around like he was John Wayne. He said "this is easy" and began to pretend he had a rope and was lassoing in cattle. He paid no attention to Annie. He was cocky and obnoxious and lacked the kind of humbleness you needed on a horse, a kind of respect for the process of riding. Maybe this was his way of hiding his own anxieties in the face of two women who knew how to do something better

than him. Annie's face turned white and she clenched her fists. Standing on the side of the ring, I was embarrassed. The lesson ended quickly and we did not offer to put Eric on a horse again. He eventually left me in a cold and cruel manner, just stating casually one day that he had decided to move to New York and he wanted to do it alone. He had loved my stories about growing up in New York but when it came time for him to live the New York life he dropped me fast. I took him to the train station, pretended I wasn't as hurt as I really was, stifled my urge to scream and pound his chest with my fists. I eventually realized that how a person approaches a horse reveals much about that person.

But still I was heart-broken and depressed for months. Driving in the car with Annie I remember saying over and over "I will get over this, I will find someone new." But I was not convinced and thought my love life over completely. I wanted some kind of words of wisdom from Annie but this was an area unimportant to her. She tried to tell me it was really not such a big deal, and that he was a jerk. So did other people. But I couldn't really hear them. I cried a lot in those months. My riding helped take my mind off the hurt, but I was broken for a long time.

About a year before Annie was diagnosed with leukemia we were having breakfast at the Pancake House in Paoli, something that had become a Sunday morning ritual for us. We ordered mushroom omelets and I'd have coffee, Annie tea (she didn't touch coffee, or liquor, or drugs of any kind, and later would wonder out loud how someone so chaste in her habits could have gotten leukemia). It was a bustling place, full of families who had just gotten out of church, dressed-up little girls and boys of the mainline. I was sipping hot coffee when she told me she decided to sell her horses and go to art school. I knew she spun pots as a hobby and had an interest in art, but I had no idea of its importance in her life.

"I have this uncontrollable urge to paint," she said. "It's taking over my mind, my life."

I could think of nothing to say so I just smiled. I was a little shocked. She had a circle of people at Thorncroft to whom she was a queen, a fountain of rare knowledge. I was trying so hard to become more like her with horses, have more of her confidence, and she was going to walk away from all that.



Art School swallowed her completely. She produced scores of paintings. When she needed a subject to learn how to do portraits I volunteered to sit for her. I arrived at her tiny apartment in Northeast Philadelphia and she was cooking a pork stir fry for us. The aroma of garlic and onions mixed with drying paint on canvas. The walls were full of paintings and there were canvasses stacked everywhere. We ate dinner in a tiny corner where she had piled brushes and small canvasses to make room on the table for two plates. There was little room in this apartment for living, its purpose was art.

She sat me in a chair and kept positioning me until we both felt right. I wore a deep blue shirt that day, my vanity leading me to believe it would result in a more attractive portrait. Annie worked steadily and told me to hold my mouth the way I wanted it to appear, and to please, please not keep breaking out in a grin. I was a little embarrassed by it all and kept laughing, which caused her to keep starting over. But she also laughed with me. I think now I was one of the few people who could loosen her up, get her to be silly. We were becoming lighter together and having more fun. That portrait came out like no photograph of me ever looked, but it had the angles of my face just right. It made me look less merry and friendly than I always thought I was, and more angular, stark, and alone. I had long thought of myself as a people-pleaser, someone who can make others comfortable, a good hostess at a party. But Annie's portrait of me showed a different side. The side that likes to be alone, that broods, that perhaps was more like her. I didn't know back then that I would come to like to be alone, to write, to reflect. I only wanted to be admired, to be a great horsewoman, to succeed at some physical bodily pursuit, to be attractive and successful in some middle-American magazine sort of way. But Annie saw me as dark and alone and somber. I looked at the portrait and felt like I was staring at some stranger.

I used to visit her in the hospital in Northeast Philadelphia on weekday nights. She would lay in bed in her thin white hospital gown, hooked up to an I.V. She would slowly raise her big body up to go to the bathroom and would shuffle there in her slippers pushing her I.V. along. The gown was half open in the back, showing her huge white thighs. I chattered away telling her barn gossip, asking her advice on riding Clem. I brought sodas and sandwiches. She was quiet but seemed interested in my

gossip. I asked her once if she was afraid and she said, so calmly, "Why should I be afraid of death? It hasn't shown me yet that it's a bad thing, yet some things in life certainly have." I didn't know what was really underneath all that calmness, but I envied it. It was an odd thing — I'd go to the hospital room of my dying friend and she, in a way, comforted me, rather than the other way around.

I was also dealing with my father's stomach cancer in Brooklyn during that year. It was a year of racing from work to hospitals. Weeknights I was in Annie's room at Temple University Hospital, and weekends I drove the Jersey Turnpike with a mug of coffee and a set of Dylan tapes to my father's hospital bed in Manhattan.

My father was angry and frightened and it tore me apart to be in the room with him. He was in great pain, lost much weight, and I felt useless, unable to comfort, petrified of losing him. I was emotionally paralyzed with my father, full of fear about him dying, useless to him and the rest of my family. I remember wishing that some of Annie's serenity could be transferred to him, or that the two of them could talk, or meet, or she could somehow help him. It seemed painful to be in his room, and comforting to be in hers.


My own life was on hold that year. I was lonely all the time, I was exhausted from the drives, the hospital visits, the constant small chatter I had to keep up in these rooms to make things seem normal. I began to wonder why I was healthy and they weren't. I began to feel my body for lumps and signs of disease and play the scene over and over in my head of how I'd feel if a doctor said to me "it's malignant."

Annie's hair fell out and she took to wearing gypsy scarves around her head. She looked like this big peasant woman, her round pumpkin face framed by this flat, colorful scarf. We joked about her piercing her ears, and wearing big hoops in them to complete the picture of a wild gypsy woman. For such a colorful off-center look would have been so foreign to her usual conservative self. I could do no such thing with my father. When his hair fell out I found him a wig in Philadelphia and brought it to him. I was so proud of myself, for it was black tinged with gray, wavy hair exactly how his hair had been. I thought it would make him feel less embarrassed with visitors. But he looked at it for three seconds and waved it away bitterly. "I don't want it" he said. "My hair's not important.

Take it back." My eyes got wet at the hopelessness of it all, at the impossibility of comforting him with this silly wig, at my desperate attempts to just get some kind of smile from him.

Annie's funeral was Quaker. We sat in a plain room on benches. I was unable to speak, but horse friends and art school friends and dance friends told little stories about her. Everyone knew her in the context of some artistic pursuit of hers, as a particular expert at something. I envisioned her dancing with horses somewhere, but I also saw her pain, the misfit she was in her family. I saw the woman who put on such a brave exterior fighting cancer, and I wondered about so much she hadn't said.

I eventually stopped riding horses, got married and had a child. I moved to Maine, where the land is rocky and heavily wooded and the winters are endless and raw. Riding did not hold the same attraction anymore — the climate and land were too harsh. I never became the equestrian star I dreamed

of but I didn't feel like a failure. For Annie taught me more than riding. She taught me about the courage to be alone, admit what I don't know and take it on anyway with some faith. So I have taken on a family, and dancing, and writing too. The truth is I was getting tired of teaching girls how to post on horses, impatient with the competition and snobbiness of the horse world. I was ready to admit that my temperament wasn't suited to jumping big fences and that this was okay. Annie would have understood my taking a new path. Had she lived, she might have become a noted artist. Or maybe gone on to something new. I can see her learning the violin, the piano, taking on tap dancing, immersing herself in the newness of it all, studying the technicalities, having a childlike innocence in the face of it, her brain spinning and calculating at the challenge. Be on the lookout for what it is you need to do, she whispers to me as I sit in my living room and stare at her perfect moment in the air with Paprika. Then have the faith and jump right in. 

## Mother Never Said... by Jessica Yankura





**Dr. Kathryn Lasky,**

Director of Media Studies

The love of movies has led her to various careers: Directing television commercials, producing and directing feature length documentary films/videos, experimental works and shorts. She believes that "to create is a sacred act; who cares if the work gets to Cannes or is seen only among friends. It's about creating, playing and having fun; not about product, evaluation and competition."



**Dr. Daniel A. Panici,**

Assistant Professor of Communication. He has taught at several universities and

Colleges around the United States and published several articles on issues ranging from the management of student television and radio stations to the use of effective writing strategies. He believes that "in order to understand the nature of media you must view media as one-part art, one-part business, and one part-science."



**Prof. Barbara Hope,**

Coordinator of Professional Writing. Barbara Hope has received

a M.A. in English/Creative Writing and a M.F.A. degree in Creative Writing. She directs the Stonecoast Writer's Conference, and Celebrate Writers Festival. She is the recipient of a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship and a Maine Arts Commission Fellowship for fiction has appeared in numerous journals, such as *New Virginia Review*, *The North American Review*, *Beloit Fiction Journal*, and others. In addition to teaching in Media Studies, she also teaches in the English Department.



# MEDIA STUDIES

## The Bridge To The 21st Century

by Lisa Solomon

**W**E, GRATEFULLY APPLAUD THE EMERGENCE of the new interdisciplinary Media Studies program. Led by Dr. Kathryn Lasky, Director of Media Studies, the five year process of organizing a degree in Media Studies was brought into fruition with the help of the provost, dean and faculty. Also very instrumental in the program's conception and upbringing are full time faculty members, Professor Barbara Hope, M.F.A., Coordinator of Professional Writing, and Dr. Daniel Panici, Assistant Professor of Communication.

A special cheer goes out to President Pattenau for supporting the program, rather than the more popular cutbacks. He has vision in recognizing that this is a program that students really want and need.


This progressive program offers students the flexibility to specialize in one of three concentrations: 1.) *Professional Writing*, 2.) *Media Theory, History, or Criticism*, or 3.) *Multimedia Production and Design*.

In order to enhance your academic studies and to prepare students for a competitive job market, the Media Studies program offers a wide array of experiential learning opportunities. Portland is a media-rich and culturally diverse city; consequently, the program is able to provide accredited internships at various media outlets, including network television affiliates, advertising and public relation firms, multimedia production companies, newspapers, and magazines. The program also provides internships on a national level.

The Media Studies program fosters a sense of community at USM by promoting involvement in one of many student media groups on campus, such as

USM-TV, WMPC, *The Word Society*, *The Free Press*, and our own personal favorite-*The Review*. Through participation in these dynamic, successful media outlets students can gain invaluable experience.

The Media Studies core courses include: The Writing Process, Introduction to Mass Media, Community Involvement Practicum, Media Laws and Ethics, and Senior Project. As students dive deeper into the Media Studies program they will find a diversity of courses ranging from Creative Writing to Broadcast Copyrighting to Television Criticism and Aesthetics to Multimedia Presentations and much, much more.

This program challenges students to create, analyze, and deliver messages in various media. They will enrich their academic experience through apprenticeships, community service, and a senior portfolio project. By focusing on the interdisciplinary nature of mass media, this program should give students a competitive edge as they prepare for their future. 

Are you interested in knowing more? Visit the Media Studies web site: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/~com>

# Contributors

**T**hanks to the following for their contributions to this years publication: **Jennifer Allen** is an alumna of USM, and she currently resides in Portland, Maine. ■ **Julie Ankrom** is a junior working toward her bachelor's degree in music education. She is currently involved in concert band, wind ensemble, clarinet choir, and university chorale. Some of her hobbies include musical ensembles, teaching private clarinet lessons, directing the choir at her church in Naples, plastic canvas, and writing poetry.

■ **Jennifer Boggs** is an English major at USM. She is a senior who is currently grappling with feelings of great ambition and the realities of underachievement. ■ **Catherine Brown** lives and works in Portland, Maine. She graduated as a history major from USM, and is currently a part time graduate student in the Counselor Education Program at USM. Catherine has been previously published in *The Review* and in the National Library of Poetry Anthology. ■ **Gregory Burns** resides in Windham, Maine, and he is an English Major at USM. ■ **Hugh Chatfield** is a 1985 graduate of UCLA's Theater Division. He has been rehabilitated from a severe head injury sustained in 1987. He writes as a special student at USM's English Department.

■ **Lisa DeHahn** is a special student in the Honors Program at USM. She graduated from Colby College in May 1995 with a double degree in English and Performing Arts. She is currently working with youth at a teen shelter, but will always be a writer at heart. ■ **Bronson Fish** is an English major and a soon-to-be sociology minor. Besides school he works full time doing residential care, is a part time parent to Ezra, his three-year-old son, and finds time to record music at home and participate in gaming. ■ **Laurie A. Glidden** is a part time USM student who lives in Portland, Maine. She was published in our 1996 issue of *The Review*.

■ **S.M. Hall** ■ **Gertrude Havu** ■ **Lori Kerns** is a junior at USM studying the fine arts. She plans on graduating with a BFA with a concentration in photography. ■ **Jennifer Lunden** has been out of the writing loop for a few years, but is on her way back. She is also a senior at USM, majoring in English. She has read her work at poetry readings, and has published her work here and there in small magazines. She lives with her husband in an old farmhouse in Standish. ■ **Ellen McEnaney** is a student of USM living in South Portland.

■ **Charity Pabst** is a senior at USM with a focus in ceramics. She is graduating in May of this year. Charity lives in Portland and works for her family's local business making canes, walking, and hiking sticks. In her spare time Charity enjoys making art, loves music and works as the arts editor for a Baha'i youth magazine called *One*. ■ **Ernest Pike** is a photographer for *The Free Press* and a student at USM.

■ **Ian Ramsey** is just getting back from over eight months in Alaska. He is a Music Major. ■ **Lisa Riopell** is a past student of USM. She enjoys roller-blading, travel, reading, and adventure. This is the first time she has been published in this country. ■ **Concetta Smith** lives in North Yarmouth and is a student of USM.

■ **Adam Smith** is a student of USM living in North Yarmouth. ■ **Susannah Sturtevant** expects to graduate with a B.A. in Art from USM this Spring. She is currently making a series of screen printed banners for Ingraham Volunteers. Susannah invites you to stop in at *Drop Me A Line* on Congress Street in Portland to look at her line of linocut greeting cards. ■ **Bethany Vogt** is a senior self-designing a major in Visual Design with a Minor in Business Administration. She works as a freelance graphic artist under the name of DoorStep Graphics. Check out her new web site at, [www.usm.maine.edu/~bvogt51](http://www.usm.maine.edu/~bvogt51) ■ **Martha Whitten** is a fourth year Art student at USM. Her concentrations are Painting, Drawing, and Photography. ■ **Shayne Worcester** has co-written and directed an independent feature film called "Reindeer Games," which premiered at the Portland Museum of Art. He is writing another script now and hopes to be in production by the end of this year. He is also continuing to write poetry. ■ **Jessica Yankura** is an Art History and Photography Major at USM. She is quite fond of her friends and family.



*Lisa Solomon*  
Artist Representative

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# Casco Bay

# Weekly

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# Photo Market

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